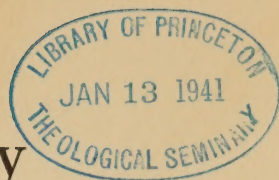


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AMERICAN SLAVERY
AND
MAINE CONGREGATIONALISTS



American Slavery AND Maine Congregationalists

*A Chapter in the History of
the Development of Anti-slavery Sentiment
in the Protestant Churches
of the North*

By CALVIN MONTAGUE CLARK, D.D.

WALDO PROFESSOR—EMERITUS OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY
IN BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF
REV. DAVID THURSTON, D.D.
of Winthrop

AND

PROFESSOR WILLIAM SMYTH
of Bowdoin College

STAUNCH LEADERS

AND OF THOSE MEN AND WOMEN OF MAINE
WHO WITH THEM FOUGHT AN HEROIC FIGHT
FOR HUMAN FREEDOM AND EQUAL RIGHTS

PREFACE

This book, when begun, was intended to be but a chapter in the third volume of the writer's *History of the Congregational Churches in Maine*, the first and second volumes having been published in 1926 and 1935, respectively. As the work of preparation progressed the material discovered was so abundant, and proved of so great interest, that the results exceeded any possible single chapter in the book as originally planned, and have become a modest volume in themselves.

The writer was not aware of the existence of any comprehensive and adequate treatment in print of the history of the controversy in Maine over slavery, far and away the most serious and influential matter of controversy in our country's history in the nineteenth century. This volume does not pretend to fill the gap; far from it. Nor does it narrate the history of the controversy as carried on by the churches as a whole. It is confined to the story of what the Congregational churches and their leaders said and did regarding slavery, from the beginning down to the putting in force of the Emancipation Proclamation. During that entire period the Congregationalists were the most numerous and perhaps the most influential denomination in the State; their leaders were men of education and culture, of great native ability, and with a commanding influence in all cultural and ethical as well as religious movements in Maine. Hence the story of the struggle over slavery in this denomination, as a phase of the great struggle as a whole, has a large intrinsic value, the history of which has never been told.

Further, among the religious denominations, especially in the North, the Congregationalists, at least in Maine, repre-

sented all phases of northern religious opinions on the matter of slavery. Among them were some able men who were apologists for slavery, and there were others, the vast majority, whose views ran the whole of the rest of the gamut of opinion to the extremest abolitionism. It is obvious, therefore, that the history of the controversy in this denomination is not only a microcosm of the entire nationwide controversy, but especially is typical of the controversy that was waged vigorously and with varying results in all the other denominations in the North. As thus typical, this narrative has a further value.

As the writer has proceeded with his task, he has come to have a profound sympathy with, but a somewhat modified admiration for, that coryphaeus of abolitionists, William Lloyd Garrison. The system of American slavery was the mightiest incubus of evil any nation ever lay under. No student who has not traversed somewhat thoroughly the ground from the start to the triumphant, if bloody finish in four years of civil war, can begin to understand the enormity of the evil; or the incalculably tremendous difficulties which faced those who grappled with it; or the heroism and sacrifice of those men and women; or, most of all, can measure the magnitude of the final fight. As is well known, Garrison was so convinced that the churches of the North were, by their apathy if not their sympathy, the chief stronghold of the power of slavery, that he forsook the church, though at heart a profoundly religious man. Now, incidentally and unexpectedly, the writer has been led in his studies to a far more mild, and, he believes, more just judgment of the Christian church of the North, as a whole, as to its real attitude towards slavery and its desire to rid the nation of the evil. He is convinced that Garrison misjudged the real conviction and temper of the church of the North, and failed to perceive the heart of the rank and file of its members.

The following narrative is purposely made up in large meas-

ure of actual statements made by the men of the times instead of attempts to reproduce their statements in words of the writer. Hence numerous and in some cases long quotations. Only thus does the reader come face to face with the men of the older time and think their thoughts after them.

The writer would express his sincere thanks to Miss Elsie M. Olmstead, Secretary to the President of the Seminary, for excellent assistance in preparation of the manuscript, and to the Plimpton Press for every courtesy in the printing of the book.

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June 1, 1940.

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PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

C.M., — *The Christian Mirror*, published weekly in Portland, from Aug. 24, 1822 to 1899.

M.G.C., — Minutes of the General Conference of Congregational Churches in Maine, published annually from 1826.

M.M.So., — Reports of the Maine Missionary Society of the Congregational Churches, published annually from 1807.

Smith, Journal, ed. Willis, Journals of the Rev. Thomas Smith and the Rev. Samuel Deane, Pastors of the First Church in Portland, and edited by William Willis.

Town Histories are quoted by the author's, and the town name simply.

AMERICAN SLAVERY
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DIVISION I

EARLY CONDITIONS, 1619 to 1830

Origin and Course of the Slave-trade. The negro slave-trade was begun by the Portuguese and Spaniards a full half century before the discovery of America. The colonial development consequent upon this discovery led to a great expansion of the trade, at first naturally at the hands of the Spanish, because of their early conquests and colonization in Central and South America; but soon, because of the commercial rivalry between Spain and England, at the hands of the English. By 1790 more than half the total number of Africans brought to America were conveyed by British ships, the traffic steadily mounting from the time of Sir John Hawkins, about 1562, till 1790, the two centuries when English colonization in America was most active. Although the first importation of negro slaves into the American colonies, that into Virginia in 1619, was by a Dutch ship, the subsequent importations were chiefly by English. It has been estimated that the total importation into all the British colonies of America and the West Indies from 1680 to 1786 was 2,130,000. If, as in the case of some of the English colonies in North America, this importation of negro slave laborers was opposed by the colonial governments, it was fostered by the English government at the urgency of English traders and of many of the colonists, especially those engaged in commerce.

Opposition of the English Colonies to the Traffic. Among the colonies which opposed the trade was Massachusetts, its Great and General Court passing various ordinances to that end, but the trade still went on through the insistence

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of the home government and of colonial merchants and ship-owners. In the case of the Province of Maine, so far as known, no ordinances were passed respecting the traffic in slaves under the Gorges charter. After the purchase of Maine by Massachusetts from the Gorges heirs in 1677, the laws and ordinances of the latter, of course, ran in the former, unless special exception were made.

Slaves in Early New England and Maine. When, where, and by whom the first negro slaves were introduced into the Province is not known.¹ It was certainly earlier than 1700, since in that year a negro slave was given his freedom by John Shapleigh of Kittery.² The slaves entered the Province most naturally at the then flourishing provincial seaports such as Kittery and Falmouth. The northern climatic conditions in the Province led to most of those introduced being employed by the wealthier and more aristocratic families as household or body servants rather than as field laborers. Thus, again in Kittery, the firm of the Pepperrells had consigned to them from Antigua in 1719 five negro slaves, of whom however four died *en route*, and the fifth died soon after arrival. Sir William Pepperrell, after the capture of Louisburg, is said to have kept "a splendid barge, with a black crew dressed in uniform." In his will he bequeathed four negroes to Lady Pepperrell.³

Conditions in the North Unfavorable to Slave Labor, and Few Slaves in Maine. The climatic and social conditions of slave-holding in the Province made it unlikely that any large numbers would be introduced. Conditions, too, in a frontier Province were not favorable to either large wealth or a consequent numerous aristocracy. By the middle of the eighteenth century, according to the returns made in 1754 by

¹ Cf. *The Christian Mirror*, Mar. 26, 1840, p. 136, hereafter cited as *C.M.*

² *Old Eliot*, Vol. 3, p. 141.

³ Quoted from Williamson's article, entitled "Slavery in Maine," in *Coll. Me. Hist. So.*, Ser. I, Vol. VII, p. 213. Cf. *Old Eliot*, Vol. 3, p. 141; Stackpole, *Kittery*, pp. 48, 58, 76; Eaton, *Thomaston and Camden*, Vol. I, p. 86; Bourne, *Wells*, pp. 405 ff.

the assessors for the towns of York county (at the time the only county in the Province), out of the total population of the thirteen towns making returns there were only one hundred forty-seven negro slaves sixteen years old and upward. There may have been two hundred negroes all told, counting those under sixteen. By far the most of these were held in five towns, the then wealthiest settlements in the Province. In Kittery there were thirty-five, in York twenty-four, in Berwick twenty-two, in Falmouth (Portland) twenty-one, and in Wells sixteen. The remaining twenty-nine were held in Scarborough, Arundel (Kennebunkport), North Yarmouth (Yarmouth), Brunswick, Georgetown and Gorhamtown, Scarborough having the largest number, eleven. The returns from Biddeford and Newcastle are wanting.⁴ Ten years later, in 1764, after the close of the French and Indian wars, by an order of the Lords of Trade and under the direction of the General Court of Massachusetts, another census was taken. About thirty towns and plantations made returns. The total population of the Province was reported to be 24,020, of whom three hundred thirty-four were negroes, probably all slaves.⁵ There were then three counties in the Province, Cumberland and Lincoln having been formed in 1760. Of the above number of negroes two hundred fifteen were in York county, ninety-five in Cumberland county, and twenty-four in Lincoln county. Towns having more than ten negroes were Kittery, York, Falmouth, Berwick, Wells, North Yarmouth, Scarborough, Harpswell, Biddeford and Georgetown, in the order of the number held. No negro is reported north of Pownalborough, nor east of Newcastle. However, there are traces of negroes as far east as Thomaston and even Machias.⁶

Slaves Held by Ministers. In the eighteenth century the ministers, though not usually to be reckoned among the wealthy,

⁴ *Coll. Mass. Hist. So.*, Ser. 2, Vol. III, pp. 95 ff.

⁵ Williamson, *Hist. of Me.*, Vol. II, pp. 372 ff.

⁶ Eaton, *Thomaston and Camden*, Vol. I, p. 86; Drisko, *Machias*, p. 43.

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were certainly considered among the aristocracy, of the provincial population. By several of the early ministers slaves were held, obtained either by their own purchase or by the generosity of their parishioners. Thus, for "Father" Samuel Moody, the eccentric and always impecunious minister of York First, his parish voted in 1732 to purchase a slave, and appointed a committee to make the purchase; at the same time it was voted to hire a man to live with Mr. Moody until such purchase was made, since in 1734 "the parish voted again to hire a man or buy a slave for Mr. Moody; and £120 were voted for the purpose, the assessors being instructed to buy the slave and deliver him to the minister, to be employed in his service during the pleasure of the parish. Again in 1735 the assessors were ordered to take care of the negro till the next parish meeting. At this meeting, held in March, 1736, the assessors were authorized to dispose of the negro to the best advantage."⁷ Apparently Mr. Moody was not well served by the negro, or had some scruples about slaves. The records of the parish reveal no further dealings in slaves.

To Rev. Thomas Prentice, second minister of Arundel (Kennebunkport) from 1730 to 1738, the town, "after a long debate, gave £30 towards buying him a servant," and the negro he bought is said to have been the first slave owned in the town.⁸ Mr. Prentice's successor from 1741 to 1768, Rev. John Hovey, also owned a slave, whether bought by himself or by the parish does not appear. In his *Journal* for October 21, 1747, Mr. Hovey notes, "My negro ran away"; and he further notes, under date of November 1, of the same year, "My negro living at ———; I carried him to Boston." This was probably to dispose of him, as Mr. Hovey does not mention him later.⁹ A negro by the name of London Atus is mentioned as by local tradition the body-servant of Rev. James Lyon,

⁷ Moody, *York*, pp. 221 f.; Garfield, *First Church York, Manual*, p. 21.

⁸ Bradbury, *Kennebunkport*, p. 137.

⁹ Bradbury, as above, p. 158.

the able minister in Machias from 1771 to 1794.¹⁰ Dr. Thomas Smith, first minister of Falmouth, in his *Journal*, under date of November 16, 1774, records, "Our negro man, Jack, died."¹¹ Dr. Smith later owned a slave called Romeo. At the outbreak of the Revolution Dr. Smith was seventy-four years of age, too old himself to respond to the increasingly urgent need for soldiers. Hence, as the war progressed, and the call for soldiers became insistent, he had his slave enlist for a service of three years, giving him his liberty on condition that he himself as owner should receive half of the slave's wages as a soldier, that is, ten shillings out of twenty a month. Under date of May 8, 1781, he made a written agreement in the matter, ending with the words, "I liberate and give up all right, claim and title to him and his service, and to all intents and purposes to be his own, or a Free man."¹² Dr. Smith, on the death of his son, Thomas, in 1776, offered £700, old tenor, for "a negro man, and a likely young negro woman," being part of his son's estate.¹³ The historian of the town of Bristol, remarking that it is believed only two or three slaves had been held in that town, says, "One of these was held by Mr. Given, father of the wife of Rev. Alexander McLean," who was minister of the Bristol church from 1773 to 1808.¹⁴

Treatment of Slaves in Maine. The negroes held as slaves in Maine would appear from such slight evidence as has come to light to have been kindly treated. Naturally, treatment if rough or cruel would not likely be made a matter of record. In the case of the church at Kittery, organized in 1721, the last name on the list of those joining in 1746 is that of "Hannah, a negro woman."¹⁵ Other churches probably had in their membership negroes who were slaves. So far as noted, volun-

¹⁰ Drisko, *Machias*, p. 43.

¹¹ Smith, *Journal*, ed. Willis, p. 225.

¹² Willis, *Portland*, p. 539.

¹³ Smith, *Journal*, ed. Willis, note under date of Feb. 10, 1776.

¹⁴ Johnston, *Bristol and Bremen*, p. 373.

¹⁵ Stackpole, *Kittery*, p. 202.

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tary emancipation of slaves was rare. The case of a slave owned by John Shapleigh, of Kittery, has already been noted. Isaac Royall, Jr., of Durham, was a Tory, and on the outbreak of the Revolution, like so many Tories in Maine as elsewhere, fled the country, going first to Halifax and finally to England. He must have left his American home in haste, leaving his belongings behind him, for from Halifax he wrote to his agent in Durham, in May, 1776, regarding the disposition of his slaves, giving directions as follows, "Two men, Stephen and George, might be sold for £50; Hagar, a woman, for £30; and Mira, also a woman, for £25"; "as to Betsey and her daughter, Nancy, the former may tarry, or take her freedom, as she may choose, and Nancy you may put out to some good family by the year."¹⁶

Effect on Slave-holding of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights. The liberation of his slave, Romeo, by Dr. Smith of Falmouth in 1781, was also probably voluntary, in spite of the fact that the Declaration of Rights, prefacing the new Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, adopted in 1780, opened with the words, "All men are born free and equal."¹⁷ This declaration was the successful outcome in liberty-loving Massachusetts of efforts, reaching back to as early as 1641, by many in the colony to establish universal freedom and equality. But under the conditions the declaration needed judicial interpretation. "In the first case involving the right of the master to his slave, which was adjudicated by the Supreme Court of the new Commonwealth [i.e., Massachusetts], the judges decided that, by virtue of the clause referred to, the slave no longer owed any service."¹⁸ This decision, putting an end to slavery in Massachusetts, of course,

¹⁶ Stackpole, *Durham*, p. 9.

¹⁷ The difference of these words from the opening words of the Declaration of Independence is noteworthy.

¹⁸ Quoted from Williamson, "Slavery in Maine," *Coll. Me. Hist. So.*, Ser. I, Vol. VII, pp. 207-216; cf., however, Poole, *Anti-Slavery Opinions before 1800*, pp. 53 ff.

did the same for the Province of Maine. Sarah, a negro woman, was brought as a slave by a Captain Brown into Damariscotta in 1782. She claimed and gained her freedom under the Declaration of Rights.¹⁹

Condition of Emancipated Slaves. These emancipated negroes usually settled down within the limits of the towns of their former captivity, of course in the poorer and meaner parts of the town, and continued at manual labor for their white neighbors, or for their former owners. The Sarah just mentioned married a negro by the name of Amos Peters and became the mother of a much respected family. Others of her race joined her and her husband in their settlement, till, in 1823, "they formed a sufficient number to be set off as a school district."²⁰ About a dozen negroes who had been freed by their owners in the town of Wells settled on land, probably granted them by the town, on a ridge. This site was thereafter opprobriously called "Nigger Ridge."²¹

Tradition of Freedom in Maine. Thus for forty years before the Province or District of Maine became a sovereign State in the Union slavery had been outlawed within its borders, and the new State of 1820 from the outset had a tradition of freedom and equality. Even had this not been true, the new State in its own Declaration of Rights, being Article I of the State Constitution, declared at the very beginning of its civic history that "all men are born equally free and independent."²² The only mention of negroes in the Convention to form the new State Constitution was made in a proposal to insert in section one of Article II on Electors the word "negroes" after the words "Indians not taxed." To the proposal the Hon. John Holmes of Alfred, chairman of the Committee appointed to frame the Constitution, pertinently re-

¹⁹ Eaton, *Warren*, p. 214.

²⁰ Eaton, as above.

²¹ Remich, *Kennebunk*, pp. 108 f.

²² The wording here is to be compared with that of the Massachusetts Declaration.

plied, "I know of no difference between the rights of the negro and the white man. God Almighty has made none. Our 'Declaration of Rights' has made none."²³

Four Major Events between 1780 and 1820: 1. *The Ordinance for the N. W. Territory, 1787.* Meantime, during the two score years between 1780 and 1820 four events of major importance in the history of the United States as regards the slave population had occurred. The first of these was the passing, by the Congress of the Confederation, July 13, 1787, after considerable discussion, of the Ordinance organizing the Northwest Territory. The Territory covered all land north of the Ohio river and westward to the Mississippi, ceded by Great Britain and granted by the States to the Federal Government, i.e., the present States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota. The Ordinance, as regards slavery, said, "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." As compared with the wording of the clauses of the Federal Constitution (to be noted next) bearing on slavery, the language is positive and unambiguous, and clearly expresses the growing conviction of the States lying north of Mason and Dixon's line, on the subject. All of the New England States and Pennsylvania had either abolished slavery altogether or provided, as in the case of Pennsylvania, for gradual emancipation. On the other hand, no corresponding prohibition of slavery was made respecting the territory formerly held by the southern States, south of the Ohio river and westward to the Mississippi. The indeterminate status of this region was a fairly exact reflection of the state of feeling respecting slavery in the States south of Mason and Dixon's line. Some of these States anticipated the early end of slavery, others were for its perpetuation.

2. *The Framing of the Federal Constitution, 1788.* By Ar-

²³ *Debates, etc., of the Convention of Delegates, 1820, p. 95.*

ticle I of the Federal Constitution, adopted the next year, 1788, the existence of slavery in the United States was recognized but only in veiled language, for the words "slave" and "slavery" are not used. In section two of this Article slaves are referred to as "other persons," i.e., besides "free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed." Plainly the word "person" is here used in two senses.²⁴ Again in section two of Article IV of the Constitution the word "person" is used, but instead of the words, "held in slavery," the euphemism, "held to service or labor" is employed. By section nine of Article I Congress was forbidden to prohibit "the migration or importation of such persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit . . . prior to the year 1808," but it might "impose a tax or duty on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person." Here again is the ambiguous use of the word person. The phraseology, as well as the matter of the three sections, not only expressed one of the great (probably the greatest of the) compromises made in the Constitutional Convention to effect a union of the divergent and bickering States north and south, but also ominously portends the divided sentiment, and the paltering treatment as regards slavery by the national government, for the succeeding three quarters of a century.

The two deputies to the Federal Constitutional Convention from Massachusetts were Nathanael Gorham and Rufus King. The latter was a native of Scarborough, Maine, and was "one of the most influential members of the Massachusetts Convention which ratified the Federal Constitution" the following year. Of the three hundred and fifty-five members of this Convention for ratification seventeen were ministers, of whom three came from Maine. Two of the three came from York county, Rev. Pelatiah Tingley, of Waterboro', formerly a Congregationalist but at the time pastor of a Baptist church, and Rev. Dr. Moses Hemmenway, pastor of the Congregational

²⁴ See No. LIV of *The Federalist*, written by James Madison,

church of Wells. The third minister was Rev. Samuel Perley, pastor of the Congregational church of Gray. Dr. Hemmenway and Mr. Perley voted in favor of, Mr. Tingley against, acceptance of the Constitution. Dr. Hemmenway was made a member of the important committee appointed to consider the Amendments proposed by the presiding officer of the Convention, His Excellency, Governor John Hancock. The attitude of Dr. Hemmenway and Mr. Perley on the matters of representation of slaves for the election of members of the lower House and for apportionment of taxes, and of the slave-trade, is not recorded. On the matter of the slave-trade two lay members of the Convention from Maine, Mr. James Neal of Kittery, and Hon. S. Thompson, Esq., of Topsham, are on record as opposed to any continuance. In the general discussion just before the vote was taken, Mr. Neal declared that he could not vote favorably on the whole of the Constitution, though "he liked the other parts of it," "unless his objections to this section [i.e., on the slave-trade] were removed."²⁵

3. *The Fugitive Slave Act, 1793.* Even at the time of the organization of the Federal Government so sharply was the line drawn between slave States and States free or virtually free, that Congress was soon obliged to pass legislation in pursuance of section two of Article IV of the Constitution, which read, "No person held to service or labor in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." Congress passed the first fugitive slave law on February 5, 1793.²⁶ By this law the Federal government assumed the responsibility for the return of fugitive slaves, providing that any Federal district or circuit judge, or any State magistrate, was authorized

²⁵ *Debates of the Convention for Ratification, 1808.*

²⁶ Benton, *Abridgement, etc.*, Vol. I, p. 417. For a case in Maine in 1837-1841 under this law see *Maine Hist. Memorials, 1922.*

to decide finally and without a trial by jury the status of an alleged fugitive. No other single matter in regard to slavery probably caused so much bitter feeling and trouble between North and South. On this act George Thatcher of Maine was one of seven who voted "nay," to forty-eight "yeas."

4. *The Prohibition of the Foreign Slave-trade, 1808.* The fourth major event respecting slavery during these forty years was the legal ending of the foreign slave-trade on January 1, 1808, by an act of Congress passed March 2, 1807, in keeping with section nine of Article I of the Constitution.²⁷ The first Continental Congress in a quasi-legislative act known as the "Association" had pledged themselves not to import certain articles from England or her other colonies, especially tea and slaves. The second Continental Congress had prohibited the foreign slave-trade. Both of these acts, however, were essentially war measures, and did not represent the true state of feeling of the colonies, especially in the South, regarding the trade. Consequently when the question arose in the Constitutional Convention, on August 24, 1787, Congress was forbidden to prohibit the trade under twenty years. The act of the Federal Congress of 1807 was persistently disobeyed, many northern ship owners being in collusion with the southern planters. Hence, in 1820, the year Maine was admitted to the Union, the trade was declared piracy by Congress and was made punishable with death. Even so the trade was so lucrative that it was not wholly suppressed. Certain indirect effects of the partial suppression was the increase, especially in the border States, of the propagation of slaves for the market, and a great increase of the domestic slave-trade between these border States and the Gulf States by both land and sea.

Attitude of the Churches, 1780 to 1820. Such, then, in general was the course of Federal action relating to slavery between 1780 and 1820, constituting the broad, national en-

²⁷ Every member of the Congress from Massachusetts, inclusive of the four from Maine, voted affirmatively on the matter

vironment for any action in Maine up to the year the District became an integral State in the Union, six years before the organization of the State Conference. The attitude of the Congregational churches and ministers in the State toward the institution of slavery during those forty years is chiefly a matter of surmise. In any case, expression of opinion must have been that of the individual minister or church, since the Ministerial Associations did not represent the churches; no local Conference of churches was formed till 1822; nor a State Conference till 1826. Even the expression of opinion by an individual church or minister could reach a public beyond the bounds of the individual parish only through the secular press or by means of the privately printed pamphlet or book, for no denominational paper was established until July, 1822, and then as a private enterprise. The Maine Missionary Society, it is true, was organized in 1807, but naturally and very properly it gave almost undivided attention to the religious needs of the poorer churches of the State. In its annual reports and sermons between 1807 and as late as 1824 only two references to slavery have been discovered. In the annual sermon for 1813,²⁸ the preacher, Rev. Kiah Bailey, of Newcastle, speaking to the point, "the world lieth in wickedness," said, "In the United States, where so many blessings have been enjoyed, three million souls are living in the neglect of all the stated means of grace," a very general, though a probable reference to the religious condition of the slaves. Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, in his sermon before the Society in 1816,²⁹ makes definite reference to the slaves but only as incidental to the use of strong drink in the land. As will appear, Mr. Thurston later became one of the most militant abolitionists in Maine.

Interest of the People Otherwise Engaged. During the most of this forty years it would appear that the attention of the people of the District was not much drawn to the matter

²⁸ *M.M.So., Report*, 1803, p. 8.

²⁹ *M.M.So., Report*, 1816, p. 14.

of slavery reform or, for that matter, of any other reform movement. This was not altogether strange. Maine of all the States lay most remote from the stronghold of slavery, the southern States. She herself had few or no slaves, or free negroes. During the two wars with the Motherland the attention and interest of her population were peculiarly absorbed because of her border situation and her maritime interests. Like the people of the other States, her people were engaged in framing, establishing and administering a new and hitherto untried form of government. Unlike the people of the older States, her people were increasingly engaged and agitated by the movement to set up an independent commonwealth and to take an equal place in the Union alongside the other States.

Writes a most competent historian of the United States, "In that section [viz., the North up till 1819] the status of slavery had long been regarded as settled. No one supposed for a moment that another slave State would ever be added to the Union. The anti-slavery societies, which had once been so flourishing, had fallen into decay. Between 1808 and 1814 the annual Convention of delegates from them had not been held. Even the literature of anti-slavery had ceased to appear. The moral awakening which followed the war [the Revolution] did indeed arouse a feeling that slavery was wrong; but the action this feeling developed was confined almost entirely to the South. In the long list of Vice-Presidents of the Colonization Society the only names of national repute . . . were southern men and slaveholders. The only anti-slavery newspaper then in existence in the United States, the *Philanthropist*, was edited by a southern man, and circulated in the South. The only anti-slavery societies that were really active were the manumission societies of the southern States."

³⁰

³⁰ McMaster, *A History of the People of the U. S.*, Vol. 4, p. 576. Permission of D. Appleton-Century Co., of N. Y. Cf. on sentiment in the South some resolutions of the Methodist Quarterly Conference held in Cambridge, So. Car., in Feb., 1826, in *C.M.*, for Apr. 6, 1824, p. 134.

Occasional Glimpse of Sentiment. Occasionally, it is true, we catch a glimpse of what the sentiment in the District was. For example, in 1797, when Congress was considering a bill to erect West Florida into a Territory to be known as Mississippi Territory, it was proposed that the region be treated as the North-west Territory, except that slavery should not be prohibited. Representative George Thatcher of Biddeford, representing the District as part of Massachusetts in the First to the Sixth Congresses, and the first thus to represent Maine in the Congress, moved to strike out the exception, but, after warm debate, his amendment was lost, only twelve votes being for it.³¹ Two years later, in 1799, a petition from the free blacks of Philadelphia, for the revision of the laws regarding the slave-trade, fugitive slaves, and for provisions looking towards emancipation, was before the House. A motion to refer the petition to a committee was negatived by a vote of eighty-five to one, the one being Mr. Thatcher, representing Maine. Mr. Thatcher thus proved himself a consistent supporter of freedom for the negro.

The Struggle for Admission to the Union. This situation, however, was suddenly changed in 1819 and 1820 by the struggle in Congress over the erecting of the Territory of Arkansas and the admission of Missouri and Maine. Arkansas was set up as a Territory with no restriction as to slavery by the 15th Congress, whose term expired March 3, 1819. "From the moment the 15th Congress expired, leaving the question raised by it, of freedom or slavery in the Territories undecided, the whole North, without distinction of party, was roused for action."³² In the long contest in Congress which ensued over Missouri and Maine, ending in the "Missouri" Compromise, and the eventual admission of Maine, March 15, 1820, the seven representatives from Maine in the House, with two exceptions, stood for no compromise, in spite of the fact that

³¹ Williams, *Hist. of the Negro Race in America*, Vol. I, p. 438.

³² McMaster, as above.

until almost the end of the controversy such a stand jeopardized the long and ardently sought attainment of separate Statehood. Representatives Ezekiel Whitman of Portland, James Parker of Gardiner, Enoch Lincoln of Paris, Martin Kinsley of Hampden, and Rev. Joshua Cushman, formerly pastor of the Congregational church of Winslow from 1796 to 1814, voted against compromise, as did the only senator from the District, Prentiss Mellen. Representatives John Holmes, of Alfred, and Mark L. Hill, of Phippsburg, voted for the Compromise, being two of a total of seven from New England who so voted. Naturally the division among the representatives of the District reflected the division of sentiment among the citizens and the newspapers. Mass meetings were held; pamphlets were issued; sermons were preached.

Expression of Feeling in Sermons. On the annual Fast-day for Massachusetts and Maine, April 6, 1820, less than a month after the admission of Maine, and while the controversy over Missouri was still vigorous, Mr. Asa Cummings, then a tutor in Bowdoin College, preached a sermon before the college from the text, Jeremiah XIV, 7, "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy Name's sake." At the request of the student body the sermon was printed. Among "our iniquities" considered by Tutor Cummings was slavery, and, after quoting two very current utterances of Thomas Jefferson on the evil, he himself gave vigorous expression to his abhorrence of slavery. Several years later, in 1826, Mr. Cummings, after a pastorate at the First Church, North Yarmouth (Yarmouth), became editor of *The Christian Mirror*, established in Portland in 1822, and he so continued for nearly thirty years. Through the paper he achieved a much wider hearing for his views on slavery and its treatment, views considerably changed in accent and muted in emphasis as compared with those expressed in his Fastday sermon, as will later amply appear. Through the paper he naturally became one of the most influential moulders of opinion in the churches

of the entire State.³³ A similar vigorous condemnation of slavery appears in a sermon preached by Rev. Stephen Chapin, pastor of the Baptist church of the same place, on December 22, 1820, "in commemoration of the close of the second century from the landing of the fore-fathers of New England."³⁴ These are doubtless good specimens of the sermons preached under the impulse of the struggle over the admission of Missouri, though it is somewhat remarkable that neither of these preachers makes any reference to the political controversy which was doubtless the immediate cause of their condemnation of slavery. In fact, however revealing the controversy resulting in the Missouri Compromise was of the growing place and power of slavery in the Union, the interest and activity aroused in Maine at least would seem to have been ephemeral.

Early Anti-slavery Societies, 1775 to 1829. Movements to restrict or abolish slavery of an institutional, and therefore far more permanent character have already been referred to casually. The first Anti-slavery Society in America was organized by the Friends of Philadelphia in 1775. Interrupted in its work by the Revolution, it resumed its activity in 1784, and thereafter the number of such societies multiplied, at first chiefly in the middle States and those bordering on Mason and Dixon's Line.³⁵ In 1794 these societies united in what was called at first The American Convention of Abolition Societies, but after 1818 (prior to which time there had been a decided decline in activity for some years) The American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Condition of the African Race. By 1827 there were one hundred and thirty of these societies, most of them in the South, four only in New England, and apparently none in either Mas-

³³ See *C.M.*, for Aug. 7, 1834, p. 206; and Apr. 16, 1835, p. 142.

³⁴ Both these sermons in bound volumes of miscellaneous sermons in the library of Bangor Theol. Seminary.

³⁵ E.g., The Pennsylvania Society, of which Benjamin Franklin was President, see *C.M.*, for June 5, 1845, p. 180.

sachusetts or Maine. In the organization of such societies Benjamin Lundy, a Friend born in Hardwick, New Jersey, was very active. Between 1820 and 1830 he states that in his advocacy of the movement he travelled "more than five thousand miles on foot, and twenty thousand miles in other ways; visited nineteen States of the Union; and held more than two hundred public meetings." In spite of his activity, the American Convention declined in interest and influence, and finally passed out of existence, its last meeting being held in Washington in 1829.³⁶ The northern States were apparently growing weary in well doing; the southern States were reaping the benefit of the invention of the cotton-gin by Eli Whitney, a Massachusetts Yankee, and were encouraged by their political success in the Missouri Compromise to extend the culture of cotton, and with it the institution of slavery.

The American Colonization Society, 1816. The first institution related to the negro in America to appeal to the people and churches of Maine was apparently The American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States, commonly known as the American Colonization Society. The prime mover in the organization of this Society was Rev. Robert Finley, of Basking Ridge, New Jersey. Organization was effected in December, 1816, in Washington, and in January, 1817, a constitution was adopted. Article II of the constitution, on the object of the society, read thus, "The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of colour, residing in our country, in Africa or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient. And the Society shall act, to effect this object, in cooperation with

³⁶ Poole, *Anti-Slavery Opinions before 1800*, pp. 42-53, 58-72, 75-80; Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, pp. 161 f.; Willey, *History of the Anti-Slavery Cause in State and Nation*, p. 28; *C.M.*, Dec. 19, 1828, p. 74; Sept. 13, 1838, p. 22. Willey's book is valuable because he was not only a contemporary of, but a participant in, the anti-slavery struggle, but his work has serious defects.

the General Government, and such of the States as may adopt regulations upon the subject.”³⁷ In an early publication Mr. Finley himself specified three results as chiefly sought, viz., “We should be cleared of them” [i.e., “the free people of colour”]; “we should send to Africa a population partly civilized and Christianized for its benefit,” [i.e., the missionizing of Africa]; and, finally, “our blacks themselves would be put in a better situation.”

Connections with Maine. The first President of the Society was the Hon. Bushrod Washington, a nephew of George Washington, and an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. A later president was Henry Clay. The membership of both the national and auxiliary societies came chiefly from the southern and border northern States where the problem of the free people of color was most pressing. But one of its early agents, from 1822 to 1828, was Rev. Jehudi Ashmun, the first theological instructor in the Maine Charity School, later Bangor Theological Seminary, then situated at Hampden, Maine. Mr. Ashmun labored with signal success in the Society’s first colony at Cape Montserado³⁸ on the west coast of Africa in what became later Liberia, but was compelled by reason of the sickly climate to return to America, and soon died. His connection with the Theological Seminary was too brief and unhappy to have had much influence in interesting Maine people in the Society.

Among early life-members of the Society from Maine were Rev. Eliphalet Gillet of Hallowell, his neighbor Rev. Benjamin Tappan of Augusta, Rev. N. H. Fletcher of Kennebunk, Rev. Nathan Douglass of Alfred, Rev. Asa Cummings of North Yarmouth (Yarmouth), Rev. Swan L. Pomroy of Bangor, among the ministers; and of the leading laymen of the State, John Dunlap of Brunswick, D. W. Lord of Kennebunkport,

³⁷ *The African Repository* (the Society’s organ established in March, 1825, and continued till 1892), Vol. X, p. 22, for March, 1834; cf. Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, pp. 162 f., 237 ff.

³⁸ The name is very variously spelled; see *C.M.*, July 19, 1832, p. 197.

J. P. Fessenden and C. W. Williams of Kennebunk.³⁹ Dr. Eliphalet Gillet, of Hallowell, acted for a time as an agent for the Society in Maine,⁴⁰ and at the annual meeting of the State Conference at Winthrop, in 1830, introduced a resolution which was seconded by Dr. Benjamin Tappan of Augusta, and which was adopted by the Conference, "warmly approving the great objects of the American Colonization Society, rejoicing in its progress and success, and earnestly recommending it to the prayers and patronage of the Congregational churches of the State."⁴¹ The year previous at the meeting of the State Conference at Waldoborough, an agent of the Society, Rev. George W. Campbell, had been present, and addressed the Conference. At both these meetings of the Conference, the churches were recommended to make contributions to the cause on the Fourth of July as a most fitting time for the presentation of its work.⁴²

Rev. Cyril Pearl, a graduate of Bangor Seminary in 1832, and pastor at East Orrington from 1833 to 1837, in the interval between his graduation and assuming his pastorate was an assistant agent of the Society, travelling widely throughout New England and as far as New York. He vigorously defended the Society and its cause in public journals against the onslaughts made on them by William Lloyd Garrison, the editor of *The Liberator*.⁴³ Mr. Pearl reports that the Lincoln Conference of Congregational churches, during his agency, had passed resolutions approving the plans and operations of the Society, promising cooperation, and recommending to the churches of the Conference to make contributions for its support. Similar resolutions were presented at a meeting of the Kennebec Conference but, because of opposition, laid on the

³⁹ *African Repository*, Sept. and Dec., 1825; Feb., 1828.

⁴⁰ *African Repository*, June, 1827; *C.M.*, Mar. 9, 1827, p. 119.

⁴¹ *M.G.C.*, *Report*, 1830, p. 8.

⁴² *M.G.C.*, *Report*, 1829, p. 6.

⁴³ *C.M.*, Jan. 17, 1833, p. 96 (copied from the *American Traveller* for Dec. 1, 1832); June 30, 1833, p. 181.

table.⁴⁴ As will appear later, this Conference was the home of militant followers of *The Liberator*. Possibly other Conferences took favorable action on the Society, but no record of such action has been found. The church at North Yarmouth (Yarmouth), of which Editor Cummings had been pastor, endorsed the Society under his successor, Rev. David Shepley.⁴⁵

A State Colonization Society. A State Auxiliary Society for Maine is first reported in the list of State Auxiliaries in 1831, Albion K. Parris, then ex-Governor, being President.⁴⁶ No report of the proceedings of this State Auxiliary has been discovered in the organ of the national Society.

Local Colonization Societies. A local Colonization Society was organized in Portland, November 21, 1825, at a meeting presided over by Governor Albion K. Parris, of Portland. A constitution was presented by Chief Justice Prentiss Mellen and adopted at the same meeting. Governor Parris was elected President of the Auxiliary, and among the four vice-Presidents were Chief Justice Mellen and Rev. Dr. Ichabod Nichols, pastor of the First Church of Portland. Rev. Dr. Edward Payson, pastor of the Second Church, Portland, is named first in the list of Trustees.⁴⁷ This local Society apparently had no enduring life, since, in July, 1833, the organization of a Society in Portland is reported as the result of several days of discussion between the respective advocates of colonization and abolition. In June of that year, a series of addresses on the work of the Colonization Society had been given in Portland by Rev. Cyril Pearl, and it was proposed to form a local society, no mention being made of the previous organization. On Friday, June 28, the proposal came up for action at a meeting which had been addressed by Rev. J. N. Danforth, agent of

⁴⁴ *African Repository*, Jan., 1833.

⁴⁵ *C.M.*, July 10, 1834, p. 190.

⁴⁶ *African Repository*, 1831, App.

⁴⁷ *C.M.*, Nov. 24, 1825, p. 58.

the national Society. The meeting was presided over by Rev. Bennet Tyler, successor of Dr. Edward Payson of the Second Church, but soon to go to the presidency of the Theological Institute at East Windsor Hill (now Hartford Theological Seminary), Connecticut. At the very opening of the meeting, objection to the organization was made by General Samuel Fessenden, soon to be active in the formation of the State Anti-slavery Society.⁴⁸ A prolonged and spirited discussion ensued between the supporters of the two movements, a discussion continued through no less than six subsequent meetings. The leading protagonists for the Colonization Society were Dr. Tyler and Mr. Pearl. The chief assailants from the side of the anti-slavery men were Henry Goddard, General Fessenden and two Friends, John Winslow and Samuel Hussey. The assailants relied for their arguments largely on a book published shortly before by William Lloyd Garrison entitled "Thoughts on Colonization — An Impartial Exhibition of the Doctrines, Principles and Purposes of the Colonization Society,"⁴⁹ and on matter printed in Garrison's paper, *The Liberator*. They emphasized particularly the impracticability of the colonization scheme, since in fifteen years the Society had sent to Africa only about three thousand emancipated negroes, while the slave population in the Union was increasing at the rate of over fifty thousand per year; and urged that taking the emancipated, or free, negroes out of the country "tends to quiet the apprehensions of the slaveholders and perpetuate slavery," or, otherwise expressed, "to rivet more securely the shackles of the slaves." The upshot of the discussion of the seven meetings, which stirred the whole city, was the formation of a new local auxiliary of the national Society, the constitution being signed by some two hundred persons, "a great proportion of them females." This last fact

⁴⁸ General Fessenden continued one of the ablest protagonists of the anti-slavery cause in Maine, see Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, *passim*.

⁴⁹ Cf. also Jay, *An Inquiry, etc.*, New York, 1837.

evidenced the interest of the women in the movement, even though the ideas of the time did not permit of women speaking in public. A committee of two from each church in the city was appointed to solicit more members.⁵⁰ In spite of this renewal of an auxiliary Colonization Society in Portland, the cause did not seem to make a strong appeal to the citizens.⁵¹

A Local Society in Bangor. A local auxiliary was organized in Bangor in August, 1833, after a long-drawn public debate similar to that at Portland. The chairman of the public meetings was ex-Governor William D. Williamson, who at the time was one of the vice-presidents of the national Colonization Society.⁵² Ten years later Mr. Jonathan Hyde, of Bath, made liberal contributions to the colonization cause for some years, and his name appears among the numerous vice-presidents of the Society in its annual report for 1844⁵³ and for several years thereafter. Besides him, Rev. Cyril Pearl, and ex-Governor Williamson, the present writer has thus far found no other men from Maine officially connected with the national Society. Apparently the cause of the Colonization Society appealed neither widely nor deeply to the Congregationalists, nor to the people in general, of the State, in spite of the fact that Dr. Asa Cummings, able editor of the *Christian Mirror*, vigorously espoused it in the bitterly contested controversy with the *Liberator* and the American Anti-slavery Society.⁵⁴ A survey of the record of contributions to the Society in its organ, *The African Repository*, confirms this judgment. Contributions from the Auxiliary Societies of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut are pretty constant, those

⁵⁰ *C.M.*, for July 18, 1833, and following weeks (the dating of these issues is in confusion); *African Repository*, Aug., 1833.

⁵¹ *C.M.*, June 12, 1834, p. 175.

⁵² *African Repository*, Sept., 1833.

⁵³ *African Repository*, Feb., 1844, p. 54. The local Society in Bath was the most constant in the State, see *C.M.*, Feb. 13, 1855, p. 110.

⁵⁴ See *C.M.*, Apr. 2, 1829, p. 194; June 12, 1834, p. 175; Nov. 20, 1834, pp. 58 f., etc.; Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, pp. 237 ff.; Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 454.

from Maine very irregular. In fact, the national Society's annual report for 1846 ⁵⁵ states that "there is no Society in Maine, and no agent in the State"; that "the Society is compelled, therefore, to rely on voluntary offerings of private individuals."

⁵⁵ *African Repository*, Feb., 1846, p. 43.

DIVISION II

THE THIRTIES: ORGANIZATION AND DISCUSSION

Lack of Public Interest, 1820 to 1830. After the excitement of the popular mind in Maine caused by the Missouri Compromise had subsided, except for the mild interest manifest in the American Colonization Society, little seems to have been said or done by the Congregational churches or ministers of Maine for about a decade.¹ Meantime new forces were arising, and new movements were on foot which during the fourth decade of the century produced the greatest stirring of feeling in Maine, as elsewhere in the Union, prior to that of the decade just before the outbreak of the Civil War. Great Britain having abolished the African slave-trade in 1807 a few days after the action of the Congress of the United States to the same end, and having made the trade a felony in 1811, many years before the similar action of the Congress, gradually moved to the more basic reform of abolishing slavery itself "throughout the British Dominions," especially in the West Indies. To this end the English Anti-slavery Society was organized in 1823, and the reform was pushed till in 1833 a system of gradual emancipation with compensation for the slaveholders in the colonies was established by Parliament. The influence in America of these English movements was increasingly widespread and forceful.

Pioneer Work of Benjamin Lundy. In America, independently in part at least of the American Convention and the earlier Abolition Societies already mentioned, Benjamin Lundy had established in 1815 an anti-slavery society known as the

¹ Cf. *C.M.*, Dec. 5, 1828, p. 68.

Union Humane Society. In 1821, at Mount Pleasant, Ohio, he established a journal devoted to the advocacy of the abolition of slavery, called *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*. In pursuit of his work he travelled very widely, as already noted, not only within but outside the Union. In July, 1828, Mr. Lundy, then settled in Baltimore, visited Portland and spoke at a public meeting. "We regard him," writes Mr. Cummings, the editor of the *Mirror*, and now becoming a "Moderate," "as really a philanthropist as Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Howard, and entitled to a helping hand from every friend of his country and of man. . . . You see in him nothing of the rashness of the mere adventurer."² Towards the close of his life (he died in 1839)³ Lundy published an anti-slavery journal in Philadelphia called *The National Enquirer*, which, under his successor, the poet, John G. Whittier, was renamed *The Pennsylvania Freeman*.

Entrance of William Lloyd Garrison. For some months in 1829 and 1830 Mr. Lundy was assisted in the editorship of the earlier journal by a young man whom he, pack on back, had trudged all the way from Boston to Bennington, Vermont, to see, and, if possible, to secure as a fellow worker, William Lloyd Garrison, a man destined to have an influence in the anti-slavery cause far more wide and powerful than Lundy's, especially in New England. Garrison was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, and had had a checkered career as printer and writer till he fell in with Lundy and became associated with him, in 1829, in the editorship of *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Garrison was little content to be a follower of any man. He was by nature a leader, and in his leadership a radical. As respects slavery, Lundy was in favor of gradual emancipation and of colonization of the emancipated slaves outside the United States. Garrison, with all the vigor of his ardent, forceful and uncompromising nature, was for general,

² *C.M.*, July 18, 1828, p. 194.

³ *C.M.*, Sept. 26, 1839, p. 29.

immediate, and unconditional emancipation. Under the leadership of these two men, the paper seemed to speak with divergent voice, until the Quaker said to his young coadjutor, "Well, thee may put thy initials to thy articles, and I will put my initials to mine, and each will bear his own burden."

Early Advocacy of Immediate Abolition in Maine. Garrison was not alone, nor even the first, to demand universal, immediate, unconditional emancipation, not even in Maine. Mr. John L. Parkhurst, editor of the *Christian Mirror* for a year from June 3, 1825, in the issue for September 2, 1825, writes an editorial, which, without the vehemence of Garrison, enunciates very similar views. "The duty of the nation," he writes, "is, as it has ever been, to *abolish slavery at once*. But what shall be done with the blacks? . . . for two millions of free people of color among us would be, it is said, a more formidable evil than slavery itself. That is a secondary consideration. The path of *duty* is plain: Let the oppressed go free." . . . "One thing we insist upon: if the slaveholders refuse or delay, a single year longer, to abolish slavery themselves, it ought to be done by an act of the National Legislature; and if such an act should be unconstitutional, let steps be immediately taken to amend the Constitution." Raising the question of the possibility of an insurrection of the slaves to force emancipation, such as had recently taken place in Hayti, he asserts, "Calamitous as such a struggle must be to our citizens, dreadful as must be the horrors of a *servile war*, we should regard even these as less to be deplored than the perpetual existence of slavery in our land." This was an utterance such as a few years later would have made a profound sensation in many of the Congregational churches of the State, and called forth vigorous dissent from many of the ministry. Coming early as it did, it does not seem to have caused a ripple.

Establishment of "The Liberator." The editorial partnership of Lundy and Garrison was dissolved by mutual consent, and Garrison, having gone to Boston, issued on January 1,

1831, the first number of *The Liberator*, a paper continued till the end of 1865, and, in its passionate advocacy of the abolition of slavery, vigorously, often vituperatively, opposing every person or institution which was not as pronounced in its opposition to slavery as this militant young editor. The nature of the editor and the spirit of his editorials were concisely expressed in the famous utterance in the first number of the journal, "I am in earnest — I will not equivocate — I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single inch — and I will be heard." Not content with an organ through which to propagate his views, Garrison soon moved to establish an institution to effect his ends, and accordingly the New England Anti-slavery Society was formed in Boston, in January, 1832, twelve men signing the constitution at the meeting for organization.

Early Attitude of Maine toward Garrison's Views. There were men in Maine, both ministers and laymen, in the Congregational ranks, to whom the boldly outspoken, and vigorously uncompromising views of the *Liberator* and its young editor at once appealed.⁴ Even Rev. Asa Cummings, editor of the *Christian Mirror*, and a "middle-of-the-road" man by nature and editorial cautiousness, was carried away by Garrison's impetuosity. In an editorial of considerable length in the *Mirror* for January 13, 1831, on the appearance of the first issue of the *Liberator*, he wrote expressing approval of Garrison's unsparing criticism of the condition of public sentiment in New England; endorsing the *Liberator's* summons for immediate emancipation, and saying, "*Policy and expediency* are working our ruin . . . and are leading us into mazes, which will cause us to rue the day when we first turned aside from the principles of natural right, and the law and gospel of the blessed God." He sees that "serious and appalling difficulties stare us in the face," if immediate emancipation be sought, but declares that "Such is our confidence in the government of

⁴ Cf. a long letter addressed to the editor of the *C.M.* by a committee of the Winthrop Anti-slavery So., as late as 1837, in *C.M.*, Oct. 12, 1837, p. 38.

God, that we should be willing to leave the consequences to Him "; and that " The day on which such proclamation should be made, would be one of joy and gladness, and celebrated in all after time, as not less memorable than the 4th of July, 1776." Further he says, " Who that has the spirit of a Christian, or even of a man, would not rather fall a martyr in a good cause, than bear the deserved reproach of injustice, inhumanity and tyranny." ⁵ Mr. Cummings was to have an editorial life long enough thoroughly to moderate these utterances,⁶ and lay himself open to unsparing criticism by some of the Abolitionists of the State. He never failed to express his abhorrence of slavery, but he quite failed to support the principle of universal and immediate emancipation.⁷ In consequence he broke completely with the *Liberator* and its editor.⁸ The position and sentiments of others, both ministers and laity, in the Congregational churches will appear as the narrative of affairs develops.

Garrison Attacks the Colonization Society. Attitude of Maine Pro and Con. One of Garrison's first moves in the *Liberator* was to attack the Colonization Society as really aiding and abetting, directly and indirectly, slavery, rather than tending to ameliorate it, much less abolish it. His book entitled " Thoughts on African Colonization " has already been referred to. To the defense of the Colonization Society came not only the officers and supporters of the Society in other parts of the country, but some, as Rev. Cyril Pearl, the agent, and Dr. Bennet Tyler here in Maine. Beginning in the *Mirror* for December 20, 1832, and running through fourteen succes-

⁵ Cf. an editorial in *C.M.*, Dec. 24, 1829, p. 79, for a remarkable expression of the editor's views before Garrison's time.

⁶ See editorials in *C.M.*, Feb. 24, 1831, p. 114; Oct. 20, 1831, p. 42; July 25, 1833, p. 2; June 12, 1835, p. 175. As a fact, he never could decide what to do regarding slavery, see *C.M.*, Dec. 5, 1828, pp. 66, 68; Mar. 5, 1829, p. 117; and later.

⁷ Cf. *C.M.*, Jan. 30, 1834, pp. 97 ff.; Mar. 20, 1834, pp. 125 ff.; Apr. 3, 1834, p. 134; July 10, 1834, p. 190.

⁸ Cf. *C.M.*, Oct. 12, 1837, p. 38.

sive issues ending with March 21, 1833, a person signing himself "Africaner," a resident of Maine who had travelled widely, but whose identity is otherwise carefully concealed, communicates a detailed reply to the "Thoughts" of Garrison. The reply is characterized by not only length, but keen insight, logical cogency, literary ability, and a fairness and courtesy of spirit contrasting strongly with Mr. Garrison's utterances.

On the other hand, Rev. Beriah Greene, pastor of the Union Evangelical church in Kennebunk in 1829 and 1830, but now a professor in Western Reserve college, wrote a vigorous communication to the *Liberator*, endorsing the editor's views,⁹ and this communication for substance the editor of the *Mirror* reproduced in his paper, but accompanied it with an editorial granting Professor Greene's positions "abstractly considered as doubtless correct" but challenging him to act as well as write, i.e., "to operate upon the slaveholders themselves," in order to change their opinions.¹⁰ To this editorial Professor Greene replied in May,¹¹ disclaiming the necessity to go "in person" to the slaveholders in order to make his "words, words, words" effective. To which the editor replies, in the same issue under the caption, "Abolition," in a confused and hesitant manner, which seems now to have become characteristic of him, and which soon drew down on him the protests of several of his readers. Criticism of Professor Greene was not limited to editor Cummings. One who signs himself "L.L." protests Professor Greene's abuse of slaveholders as "man-stealers" (a term common with Abolitionists) etc., and approves the editor's statement, in one of his editorials, that "The gospel does not authorize a threatening, vindictive, denunciatory mode of address, as the first effort to reform our fellow-men."¹² On the contrary, a man signing himself "L." comes to the defense of Professor Greene, and calls upon the editor

⁹ Cf. a letter from Professor Greene in *African Repository*, Jan., 1834.

¹⁰ *C.M.*, Apr. 4, 1833, p. 138.

¹¹ *C.M.*, May 9, 1833.

¹² *C.M.*, May 23, 1833, p. 167.

of the *Mirror* to "find more appropriate terms by which to characterize American slavery."¹³

The long series of articles by "Africaner," defending the Colonization Society, naturally led to replies. One writer who signs himself "Fiat Justicia," and who acknowledges that he had been formerly a friend and supporter of the Society, but is now doubtful of both its methods and effectiveness, propounds a series of seven questions, critical of the Society, for its supporters like "Africaner" to answer.¹⁴ "Have they in view ultimate universal emancipation? If they have, why do they not distinctly avow it? Which would the Society prefer to transport to Africa, free negroes or slaves? Is the scheme of the Society practicable in view of the enormous annual increase of the negro population? Is a Christian colony on the shores of Africa likely to be able to Christianize that continent, if the colony at Plymouth did not civilize and Christianize the aborigines of New England? What about the hundreds of barrels of rum exported from the United States to Liberia?" Two weeks later "Africaner" replies¹⁵ in his former urbane and forceful style, disclaiming, however, a major interest in the Colonization Society, and thus, as well as in his answers, not satisfying "Fiat Justicia," who in the same issue propounds a fresh series of questions, now addressed to the editor and the supporters of the Society. At the same time he criticizes papers such as the *New York Observer* (Presbyterian), the *Boston Recorder* and the *Vermont Chronicle* (both Congregational) for reluctance to open their columns for discussion of so important a matter. To this second series of questions from "Fiat Justicia," "Africaner" makes reply,¹⁶ but not to two further communications from the same writer.¹⁷ A

¹³ *C.M.*, July 4, 1833, p. 189; further on Professor Greene, see Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 175.

¹⁴ *C.M.*, Mar. 28, 1833, p. 136.

¹⁵ *C.M.*, Apr. 11, 1833, p. 142.

¹⁶ *C.M.*, Apr. 25, 1833, p. 149.

¹⁷ *C.M.*, May 2, p. 153, and May 9, p. 158, 1833.

communication from "Philo-Africaner" comes to the defense of the managers of the Colonization Society on the score of "Fiat Justicia's" query as to rum imported into the negro colony.¹⁸ The discussion proved rather damaging to the Society's interests in the State apparently, for it was followed by the renewed attempt to establish a local auxiliary of the Colonization Society in Portland to buttress the cause, an account of which has already been given.¹⁹ During and after the series of meetings in Portland, a contributor to the *Mirror* who signs himself "Vanderkemp," presented a series of eight articles on the subject of Colonization. He denies that he is a follower of Mr. Garrison in his vituperative course, but "in spite of him" is opposed to the Colonization Society, though he has been a constant reader of its organ, *The African Repository*. He admits that he is an Abolitionist, and a supporter, though not a member, of the Anti-slavery Society, having met with a "conversion." He asserts that the South is not tired of slavery; on the contrary. He shows that the colonization scheme cannot rid the country of the negroes; that the southern leaders and members of the Colonization Society themselves prefer to sell their slaves for shipment to the Southwest rather than emancipate them and send them to Africa; that the colony in Africa is itself weak; that its influence beyond its borders, even over the foreign slave-trade, is practically *nil*; that it is becoming a rum-selling colony. Positively, he would establish "the true doctrine" of slavery as a heinous, anti-biblical crime; having established this doctrine, he would bring the community by moral influence to accept it and act on it. He gives six reasons for his present distrust of the Colonization Society. He closes by quoting General Simon Bolivar's splendid words addressed to the legislature of his newly established South American State on the occasion of the adoption of their constitution.²⁰ To this series of calm, logical

¹⁸ *C.M.*, June 13, 1833, p. 177.

¹⁹ See *ante*, p. 22. ²⁰ *C.M.*, July 5, 1833, and subsequent numbers.

and trenchant articles the editor of the *Mirror* himself makes no reply, but admits to his columns two articles in reply to "Vanderkemp" by "Cyprian,"²¹ to both of which "Vanderkemp" replies, showing the weaknesses and fallacies of the position taken by "Cyprian."²² The discussion attracted wide attention. A man who signs himself "G. O. W.," "a distant correspondent," discussing "The Agitating Subject," portrays the perplexities involved in the question of Colonization *versus* Emancipation and points out the difficulties which attend the latter.²³ Surveying this protracted discussion as a whole, the Colonization Society seems decidedly to have got the worst of it, though one is impressed more with the fact of the stupendous problems presented the nation even then, a generation before the Civil War. It was not strange that the disputants could not see eye to eye, much less that the vast majority of even thinking people were in perplexity.

The Impracticability of the Colonization Plan. The impracticability of colonization, at least in Africa, seemed to have been made clear, but the implications of immediate emancipation brought pause to most men. That African colonization was impracticable is made clear from the fact that the Colonization Society from 1817, the year it was organized, until 1835, or during eighteen years, had shipped to their colony in Africa (over and above negroes recaptured from slave-trading vessels) only 2886 emigrants from the United States.^{23a} The average annual natural increase of the slaves of the South was reckoned at least at fifty thousand. Well might one of its critics say, "In the way the thing has been managed, and probably will be, as well might you stand at the mouth of the Mississippi and ladle out all its waters with a teacup."²⁴

First Anti-slavery Society in Maine. The vigorous on-

²¹ *C.M.*, Sept. 12, 1833, p. 18, and Oct. 3, 1833, p. 29.

²² *C.M.*, Sept. 26, p. 25; Oct. 31, p. 46, 1833.

²³ *C.M.*, June 12, 1834, pp. 173 f.

^{23a} *C.M.*, Feb. 19, 1835, p. 110.

²⁴ "M." in *C.M.*, Oct. 2, 1834, p. 30; Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, p. 314.

slaught on the Colonization Society at the meetings in Portland and Bangor in July and August, 1833, and the contemporaneous discussions in the journals of the day showed that there were many who were ready to espouse the cause of abolition advocated by Garrison in *The Liberator*, and through the New England Anti-slavery Society. As already noted, this Society was organized in Boston, in January, 1832. So far as discovered, the first such society in Maine was organized at Hallowell, Nov. 26, 1833, and was called the Hallowell Anti-slavery Society.²⁵ The first officers were, as President, Ebenezer Dole, a vigorous proponent of abolition in the old Hallowell Congregational church, of which Dr. E. Gillet had been pastor from 1795 to 1827, and who had been one of the earliest supporters of the Colonization Society;²⁶ as Corresponding Secretary, Rev. George Shepard, who succeeded Dr. Gillet in the pastorate of the Hallowell church, but in 1838 went to the professorship of Homiletics in Bangor Theological Seminary; as vice-President, a layman, Paul Stickney; as Treasurer, Robert Gardiner; and as Recording Secretary, Richard D. Rice.

Formation of the American Society. Only a week later came the Convention in Philadelphia, called to form a national Anti-slavery Society.²⁷ This Society was organized, as its forerunner, The American Convention, to unite, and make more effective, the influence of the various similar societies which were being formed in the North, especially in the middle and border States. The meeting in Philadelphia, in the temporary absence of Mr. Garrison, was presided over by Rev. Beriah Greene, at the time President of Oneida Institute, Whitesboro', New York, but soon to become a professor in Western Reserve college.²⁸ President Greene had already es-

²⁵ Cf. letter from Mrs. Simon Page, of Hallowell, quoted in Willey, as before, p. 53, and also pp. 44 and 55. Nason, *Hallowell*, p. 164, gives the date as Nov. 18.

²⁶ See *ante*, p. 32. Cf. Nason, as before, pp. 163 ff., 332 ff.

²⁷ *The Abolitionist* (organ of the New England Anti-slavery Society), Dec., 1833, p. 190.

²⁸ See *ante*, p. 31.

tablished a reputation as an eloquent preacher, a forceful writer, and a vigorous exponent of the anti-slavery cause.²⁹ Sixty-two persons, representing ten States, were present. Of the sixty-two there were present at least five from Maine. Twenty-seven vice-Presidents were named, representing all the New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio and Michigan Territory. From Maine there were four, a larger number than from any other State except Pennsylvania. These four were Samuel Fessenden, Joseph Southwick, Ebenezer Dole and Samuel F. Hussey. Among the three named from Massachusetts was Rev. Asa Rand, the first editor of the *Christian Mirror* in Portland, from July, 1822, to June, 1825, but now in 1833 editor of the *Lowell Observer*. Rev. Beriah Greene was one of the three from New York. A Board of managers was appointed, seventy-five in number, of whom seven were appointed from Maine, viz., Isaac Whitman of Portland, Prof. Calvin Newton of Waterville (Colby) College, Rev. George Shepard of Hallowell, Rev. David Thurston of Winthrop, Richard H. Vose of Augusta, Patrick H. Greenleaf of Portland, and Prof. William Smyth³⁰ of Bowdoin College. Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio only had a representation larger than Maine. The name chosen was The American Anti-slavery Society. The object of the Society as expressed in the Constitution was, "the entire abolition of slavery in the United States." It recognized the constitutional rights of the individual States as regards slavery, and declared its aim to be to convince men by appeal to reason and conscience that slavery was a heinous sin, and held that safety as well as duty demanded immediate abolition. It asserted the power and duty of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and also to prohibit the domestic slave-trade. It pledged the So-

²⁹ Cf. *C.M.*, Apr. 4, 1833, p. 140, as an example of his ability. In 1839 President Greene published a pamphlet entitled, *The Chattel Principle the Abhorrence of Jesus Christ and the Apostles; or No Refuge for American Slavery in the New Testament*.

³⁰ Name not given in the account in *The Abolitionist*, Dec., 1833.

ciety to discountenance the use of force in bringing about abolition.

The "Declaration." The Convention was not content with the adoption of a formal Constitution. A committee of ten, of which Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, was one, was appointed to draw up a "Declaration," after the manner of the Declaration of Independence issued from Philadelphia fifty-seven years earlier. Mr. Garrison was appointed to make the first draft, and worked all night, from ten o'clock in the evening till eight o'clock the next morning. This "Declaration" is a remarkable document, clear, logical, cogent, tingling with controlled energy and feeling. "Slavery is a crime"; "every American citizen who is a slave-holder ('according to Scripture') is a 'Manstealer'"; compensation for emancipation is refused as a surrender of a fundamental principle, viz., the right of no man to hold property in man.

Maine Men at the Convention. Sixty-two signatures, arranged by States, of men from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio, were appended to the "Declaration." Maine heads the list with the names of Rev. David Thurston, Nathan Winslow, Joseph Southwick, James F. Otis and Isaac Winslow. Nathan Winslow was from Portland, as was James F. Otis; Joseph Southwick, from Augusta. Mr. Thurston not only signed the "Declaration" but seconded a motion, made by Rev. Amos A. Phelps, pastor of the Pine Street Congregational church of Boston, to adopt the following significant resolution: "Resolved, That, in the opinion of the Convention, those teachers of religion who fail to lift a warning voice against the oppressions that are done in the land, in the enslaving of one-sixth of its population, do not declare the whole counsel of God, and fail in one important branch of their appropriate duties."³¹

The "Declaration" was published in full in the *Christian*

³¹ *The Abolitionist*, Dec., 1833.

Mirror, accompanied by an editorial in which the editor remarks, "It grieves us to the heart to be obliged to make exceptions to a document which savors so much of humanity and equal rights, and which breathes such strong sympathy for those who are wrongfully oppressed, but —" and then expresses sentiments which reveal the halting mind of the writer, an attitude emphasized by a long quotation from an anonymous private letter.³²

Endorsements from Maine of Book by Rev. Amos A. Phelps. A little later, in 1834, Rev. Amos A. Phelps, published in Boston a book entitled, "Lectures on Slavery and Its Remedy." The book was addressed to clergymen. There were four lectures with numerous appendices. The first lecture discussed slavery as a sin; the second answered objections to the anti-slavery positions; the third expounded the remedy for slavery, viz., immediate, complete and universal emancipation; and the final lecture answered objections to this remedy. An appendix, F, gave the author's reasons for abandoning the scheme of Colonization.

The lectures were prefaced by a "Declaration of Sentiment," seven heads with regard to slavery; and two with regard to the scheme of Colonization, viz., that it is an inadequate remedy, and does not attack the evil directly. Slavery is characterized as a great evil, a national sin; every citizen is personally responsible for it and has duties respecting it; any person pursuing a policy tending to perpetuate slavery becomes personally guilty of it; immediate emancipation is possible and obligatory; such emancipation is the duty and the interest of the master; the want in non-slave-holding States of all right of physical or legal interference is recognized but moral means must be employed; finally it is asserted that the grand obstacle to such emancipation is the will of the slaveholder, to be changed by the public sentiment of non-slave-

³² *C.M.*, Dec. 26, 1833, pp. 77 f.; cf. also *Mirror* for Jan. 23, p. 93, May 1, p. 150, and May 15, p. 159, 1834.

holders, and by their discussions with slave-holders. Appended to this "Declaration" are the signatures of one hundred and twenty-four clergymen, coming from every one of the New England States, and also from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky; two signers are not placed. Next to Massachusetts, Maine furnishes the largest number, twenty-six in all, of whom two are Professors, Calvin Newton, Professor of Rhetoric and Hebrew in Waterville College, and William Smyth, Professor of Mathematics in Bowdoin College, and two are licentiates, one a Congregationalist and one a Baptist. Four of the twenty-six are Baptists, the rest are Congregationalists. This is natural, Mr. Phelps himself being a Congregationalist. The names of the twenty-six are worthy of record here as those of men who were leaders in Maine in the early days of the great controversy. The list as originally printed was: George Shepard, of Hallowell; Thomas Adams, of Vassalboro'; David Thurston, of Winthrop; Isaac Rogers, of Farmington; Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor; Wales Lewis, of Brewer; Joseph R. Munsell, of Burlington; Josiah Peet, of Norridgewock; Isaac E. Wilkins, of Fairfield; George W. Hathaway, of Bloomfield; Simeon Hackett, of Temple; John A. Vinton, of New Sharon; Henry Richardson, late of Sidney; Samuel Talbot, of Wilton; Alden Boynton, of Industry; Joseph P. Fessenden, of South Bridgton; Charles Soule, of North Bridgton; Josiah T. Hawes, of Topsham; Thomas Ayer, of Albany; Carlton Hurd, of Fryeburg; Sylvanus Boardman, of the Baptist church of New Sharon; William Glover, of the Baptist church of Bloomfield; Professors Newton and Smyth, as above; Joseph C. Lovejoy, a licentiate student in Bangor Seminary, a son of Rev. Daniel Lovejoy, pastor of the Congregational church in Albion, and a brother of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, martyred at Alton, Ill., in 1837; finally, E. L. Magoun, a Baptist licentiate, preaching at Burlington. As the local Congregational Conferences were constituted in 1833, of the twenty-two Congregationalists, nine were included in Kennebec Conference, viz.,

Shepard, Adams, Thurston, Rogers, Hackett, Vinton, Richardson, Talbot and Lovejoy; four in Somerset Conference, viz., Peet, Wilkins, Hathaway and Boynton; three in Penobscot, viz., Pomroy, Lewis and Munsell; three in Cumberland, viz., Fessenden, Soule and Smyth; two in Oxford, viz., Ayer and Hurd; and one in Lincoln, Hawes. The representation from Lincoln Conference is by a stated supply not by one of the settled pastors. There was no representation from Washington, Hancock and Waldo, or York Conferences. There is a notable lack of representation from the large commercial and maritime centres of the older counties, York, Cumberland and Lincoln.³³

Kennebec Conference First Conference to Express Anti-slavery Sentiment. As might have been expected from the clearly very strong anti-slavery sentiment in Kennebec Conference, it was this Conference which as such took the first action among the Conferences in the State in regard to slavery, in the form of mild resolutions introduced by Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, at the annual meeting of that body held at Clinton, September 18 and 19, 1833. It should be noted that this is more than two months earlier than the formation of the Hallowell Anti-slavery Society and the organization of the American Anti-slavery Society at Philadelphia. The resolutions read as follows:

“Resolved, That the ignorance, degradation and oppression, of more than two millions of our fellow men unrighteously held in slavery, entitle them to the sympathy, prayers and efforts of the churches.

“Resolved, That it be recommended to the churches belonging to this Conference to observe *the fourth Monday evening* in each month, as a concert of prayer to God, for the colored population of the United States, that they may enjoy their inalienable rights, and the advantages of education and Christian instruction.”

The reporter to the *Mirror* comments on the resolutions

³³ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 42 f., 108.

thus, that "It is the least we can do, and prayer to God for them is indispensable, whatever else we may do."³⁴

First Utterance of the State Conference. At the annual meeting of the State Conference held at Bath, June 24 to 26, 1834, the first notice of slavery in the records of the Conference is made in a still milder resolution than that of the Kennebec Conference, introduced however by Mr. Thurston, and reading, "Resolved, That it is the duty of Christians to sympathize with the enslaved of our race; and to pray that involuntary servitude may come to an end, as soon as may be, throughout the world."³⁵

Earliest Movement to Form a State Anti-slavery Society. So far the denominational expressions had been limited to resolutions of the mildest sort. Evidently those in the State who, like Mr. Thurston, were out-and-out Abolitionists were feeling their way cautiously to more pronounced and stirring measures. Soon after the meeting of the State Conference at Bath it was reported that a few anti-slavery men had held an informal meeting there and had laid plans to call a private meeting for the formation of a State Anti-slavery Society, the one reporting declaring himself in favor of the movement, but desiring that such publicity should be given to the call that towns and religious societies might send delegates to it.³⁶ A little later a letter appeared in the *Christian Mirror* from "C. C.," approving the Colonization Society, but stating his personal belief that more ought to be done, and hoping to see an Anti-slavery Convention called in Maine.³⁷ Another letter in the *Mirror*, two weeks later, from "Non" in "Cumberland Co.," with the caption, "The Agitating Question," and asking "What shall we do?", declares the writer to be "a decided Abo-

³⁴ *C.M.*, Sept. 26, 1833, p. 26. The reporter was probably the editor. Cf. editorial comment on the resolution adopted at the State Conference below, in *C.M.*, July 3, 1834, p. 186.

³⁵ *M.G.C.*, 1834, p. 14.

³⁶ "Philo-doulos," *C.M.*, July 24, 1834, p. 198.

³⁷ *C.M.*, Aug. 7, 1834, p. 205.

litionist," and supporter also of the Colonization Society, approving the object of the American Anti-slavery Society, but fearing that its measures are injuring the cause. Further, he fears that "public discussion of so debatable a matter in the church shall divide the churches and hurt revivals."³⁸

The sheltering of writers of the time in public journals behind assumed names was quite customary, and perhaps excusable when the questions of colonization vs. emancipation, and of the treatment of slavery in general, so full of explosive possibilities, were before the public, but a later generation could devoutly wish that it might know who the men were who hid behind *noms-de-plume*.

Call for a Convention at Augusta. In the same issue of the *Mirror* with this last letter appears the expected call for a Convention, inviting "all the Anti-slavery Societies in Maine, by their delegates, and others, friends of immediate emancipation, to join them in a Convention, to be held at Augusta, on the third Wednesday of October next [i.e., the 15th], at 10 o'clock A.M., to unite in fervent prayer to Almighty God that he would direct and bless our efforts to abolish Slavery throughout our land; to deliberate solemnly and calmly upon the best means to accomplish this just and holy undertaking; to pass such resolutions as may secure a harmonious course of action among all the friends of immediate abolition and to organize a State Anti-slavery Society, on the broad principle of the duty of the immediate, entire, practical abandonment of Slavery in these United States."³⁹

Signers of the Call. This call was dated August 16, 1834. It was signed by thirty-six men from fourteen towns and cities, as follows:

Winthrop, David Thurston, Ezekiel Holmes, Stephen Sewall.
Augusta, Asa Redington, Jr., Joseph Southwick, John Hovey,
 John Eveleth.

Waterville, F. Gow, H. W. Day.

³⁸ *C.M.*, Aug. 21, 1834, p. 6.

³⁹ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 45.

Hallowell, Arthur Drinkwater, George Shepard, Ebenezer Dole, R. Gardiner, Richard D. Rice.

Portland, Samuel F. Hussey, Samuel Fessenden, Nathan Winslow, John Winslow, James F. Otis, P. H. Greenleaf, James Appleton, Samuel Edwards, William Coe, Henry Goddard, George Ropes.

Bangor, S. L. Pomroy, John Godfrey, Esq., Joseph C. Lovejoy.

Brunswick, William Smyth.

Topsham, Josiah T. Hawes.

S. Bridgton, Joseph P. Fessenden ^{39a}

N. Bridgton, Charles Soule.

Brewer, Wales Lewis.

Fryeburg, Carlton Hurd.

Bloomfield, George W. Hathaway.

West Prospect, Stephen Thurston.⁴⁰

Seventeen of these thirty-six signers are men whose names have already been noted in connection with the formation of the American Anti-slavery Society, or as signing the "Declaration" prefacing the book issued by Rev. Amos A. Phelps. Rev. Stephen Thurston, of West Prospect (Searsport) was a younger brother of Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop. From the fact that David Thurston's name heads the list of signers, and from his activity at Philadelphia and in his own Conference and State, it may easily be surmised that he was the prime mover for a State Society. Fourteen at least of the signers were Congregationalists, perhaps more, since laymen are not easily identified by denomination. Twelve of the fourteen were Congregational ministers.

Additional Signatures. Later Rev. Charles Freeman, of Limerick, added his name to the call, at the same time pointing out some weaknesses in the position of the Colonization Society; ⁴¹ also an anonymous person from Machias (perhaps Rev. T. T. Stone, of East Machias) lends his name. The call

^{39a} See Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 72.

⁴⁰ *C.M.*, Aug. 21, 1834, p. 6.

⁴¹ *C.M.*, Aug. 28, 1834, p. 10.

for the Convention at Augusta was published again in the *Mirror* for September 4, 1834⁴² with two additional signers, Jacob Abbot and LaFayette Perkins, of Weld, where there was a local Anti-slavery Society, of which Dr. Perkins was President, and Mr. Abbot, Secretary.⁴³ When this local Society was formed does not appear, but its annual meeting is dated July 4, 1834, the account of this meeting containing also a series of sixteen resolutions remarkable for their comprehensiveness, moderation, positiveness of conviction, with a spice of humor, coming from a group which call themselves "Mountaineers." Most noteworthy among the sixteen resolutions is the fourteenth, summoning their "brethren in the South" to join with "all the North," "to do away slavery in the District of Columbia," and "raise their hands and voices against the admission of any more slave States or Territories into the Union." The suppression by Congress of slavery in the District of Columbia was a common demand of Anti-slavery Societies, but there is a prophetic note about the matter of admission of further slave territory, not so common in anti-slavery circles, and remarkably anticipative of the Kansas-Nebraska bill of 1854 and the tremendous agitation which it caused. These men may have been "Mountaineers," but they were gifted with prudence, foresight and a salty humor.

The Call Repeated. The call for the Convention at Augusta was published a third time in the *Mirror* for September 11, 1834, this time with fifty-five signers, seventeen more than had signed the second notice. From Wayne comes T. B. Robinson; from Wilton come Samuel Talbot, Samuel Colcord and Seth Bass; from Farmington, Isaac Rogers, John Titcomb, John Church, Jr., and John Bailey; from New Sharon, John A. Vinton and Sylvanus Boardman; from Bloomfield, James Bowen; from Milburn (Skowhegan), James Dinsmore; from Vassalboro', Jacob Southwick, Harris Foster and Moses Purinton; from Bucksport, Samuel M. Pond; from Lewiston, Samuel Pickard. Messrs. Talbot, Rogers, Vinton and Boardman had signed

⁴² P. 16.⁴³ C.M., July 17, 1834, p. 193.

the "Declaration" in Mr. Phelps' volume. The rest were new supporters. Several of them, especially those from Vassalboro', bear names common among the Friends. A last name was added late, that of Simeon Perkins, of Hebron.⁴⁴ Beside Congregationalists and Friends there were representatives from the Baptists, Free Baptists, Unitarians and probably Methodists.⁴⁵ The two first of the denominations just mentioned were early and pronounced in their abolition sentiments; the Unitarians like the Congregationalists were divided; and the time was not yet come for other than individuals among the Methodists to take an abolition stand.⁴⁶

How many more local Anti-slavery Societies there were at this time besides those at Hallowell and Weld does not appear, but the call for the Convention would seem to imply not a few.

Questions Raised by the Call. In view of the call for the Convention it was only natural that among the strong supporters of the Colonization Society and the "Moderates" among the anti-slavery men of the State there should be serious question respecting two major matters: what attitude would the Convention take toward the Colonization Society?⁴⁷ and what would be its attitude in relation to the American Anti-slavery Society, which in the utterances and spirit of some of its supporters meant to the "Moderates" rabid abolitionism or fanatical "Garrisonism"?⁴⁸ Besides these major questions it was also queried what the effect of starting inevitable controversy would be upon the harmony between churches and ministers, and even upon the work of revivals.⁴⁹ An evasive lack of explicitness in the call was alleged by some.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ *C.M.*, Oct. 9, 1834, p. 35.

⁴⁵ *C.M.*, Oct. 2, 1834, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 85, 105, 109 f. Cf. *C.M.*, Aug. 31, 1837, p. 13, Letter of D. Thurston.

⁴⁷ See *C.M.*, Aug. 21, 1834, p. 6, an editorial; and a letter from "Wilberforce"; Sept. 11, p. 19; Sept. 25, p. 21; Oct. 2, p. 31, an editorial and a letter from "M."

⁴⁸ See *C.M.*, (besides the refs. in the previous note) Oct. 9, p. 35.

⁴⁹ *C.M.*, Aug. 21, p. 6, "Wilberforce"; and letter of "Non"; Sept. 25, p. 26, "An Inquirer."

⁵⁰ *C.M.*, Sept. 25, 1834, p. 26, as above.

Vigorous Discussion. To these various questions and doubts there were not lacking answers and explanations. The charge of evasive vagueness was repelled even by the editor of the *Mirror*, and by several of the signers. David Thurston, Swan L. Pomroy, J. C. Lovejoy, George Shepard and Ebenezer Dole, jointly, and LaFayette Perkins over his sole signature, express themselves in an urbane and friendly spirit; others write with some heat and even asperity.⁵¹

Should the "Moderates" Attend the Convention? The "Moderates" were not content to ask questions and present their views in general through the public press. They were in doubt whether they would be welcomed at the Convention, and, therefore, whether it was expedient for them to attend. Hence, as the abolitionists had evidently been consulting together before calling the Convention, they, too, had foregathered for consultation. At a meeting of the Cumberland Association of Congregational Ministers during the week of August 10 to 16, probably in Portland, at which "nearly all the Congregational pastors of the county were present, beside a number of other ministering brethren," the matter of the Convention, and of its probable action as likely to become a controversial subject in the pulpit, came up in free conversation. An informal poll of the ministers present was taken, and, according to the reporter of the meeting, the vote was unanimous in condemning any encouragement or sanction of attacks upon the Colonization Society; in throwing doubts on the wisdom of the measures of the American Anti-slavery Society in securing the ends sought; and in deprecating "the usual agitation of this subject in our churches, as likely to do mischief without promising much, if any good;" and also in disapproving "the introduction of the subject into the pulpits on Sunday."⁵² A month later, on September 16, the day following a meeting in Portland to hear Messrs. Reed and Matheson, two Englishmen who came as delegates from the

⁵¹ *C.M.*, Oct. 2, pp. 30 f., and Oct. 9, p. 35, 1834.

⁵² *C.M.*, Aug. 21, 1834, p. 6, by "Wilberforce."

Congregational Union of England and Wales to visit the American Congregational churches, something more than thirty of the ministers in attendance on that meeting held a meeting to consult "whether it was in their view expedient to attend the Convention at Augusta." At this meeting it came out that interviews had been held by the "Moderates" and some of the signers, especially with five of the latter, to determine more exactly what the purpose of the Convention was. As asserted, these five had given the "Moderates" distinctly to understand that the Convention was called to organize an Auxiliary to the American Anti-slavery Society, and "was designed only for those who were prepared, or could be persuaded, to unite in such a measure." In consequence it was voted by the thirty-odd ministers at Portland, with no negative voice, "not expedient to attend the proposed Convention at Augusta."⁵³ In an editorial in the issue of the *Mirror* for October 2, the writer takes special pains to disclaim any responsibility for this meeting, and at the same time reveals that the week before, the week of September 7 to 13, a conference had been held in Bangor on the subject of the Convention between some of the signers and some of the "Moderates," the editor himself having been present. Of the signers D. Thurston, Swan L. Pomroy, Stephen Thurston, George W. Hathaway, and Joseph C. Lovejoy, were present, possibly two or three others. Also Rev. Amos A. Phelps was present. There was an equal number of the "Moderates." They held three sessions, the last continuing all night. The upshot of the sessions, which were conducted "in the most unrestrained freedom and good temper," was, as far as the "Moderates" were concerned, that "we had better stay away, if we could not go as far as themselves," i.e., the signers.⁵⁴ The only clue furnished as to the identity of the "Moderates" in these meetings at Portland and Bangor is possibly in a com-

⁵³ *C.M.*, Sept. 25, 1834, p. 27, "A Question" by "Cumberland"; cf. also *C.M.*, Oct. 2, 1834, p. 31, an editorial entitled "The Development."

⁵⁴ *C.M.*, Sept. 25, 1834, p. 27, and Oct. 2, p. 31.

munication appearing in the *Mirror* for September 11,⁵⁵ entitled "The Convention at Augusta," in which the signers state their views under six heads, saying "that the proposal of a convention to harmonize the views and feelings of good men on this subject meets our approbation," but "that in the present state of public opinion, it is expedient that any society which may be formed . . . should leave the question of Colonization untouched." This communication is signed by Rev. John W. Ellingwood of the Winter Street church, Bath; Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of the South church, Augusta; Rev. Enos Merrill, of Alna; Rev. Jotham Sewall, Jr., of First church, Newcastle; Rev. David Shepley, of First church, North Yarmouth (Yarmouth); Rev. George E. Adams, of Brunswick; Rev. Cephas H. Kent, of Kennebunkport First; Rev. George C. Beckwith, of High Street church, Portland; Rev. Jacob C. Goss, Topsham; and Mr. Jacob Mitchell, apparently a layman; ten in all. An editorial note appended to this communication remarks on the small number of signatures; intimates that some who had been approached had declined to sign; and that "No special exertions would be made to procure signers, but if they should come in spontaneously, in considerable numbers, it would afford reason and ground of encouragement for moving in this business." No further signatures were published.

Probable Attitude of the Convention. This editorial note especially, but the whole course of the discussion in general, would seem to indicate that, in the then growing state of public opinion among Maine Congregationalists, not only the Convention but the churches at large were in favor of a more positive stand, and more vigorous action, over against the evil of slavery, than was represented by the Colonization Society. So the result of the Convention proved. The intensity of feeling in the State, as in the entire country, over "the agitating question," is very patent as one follows the course of the discussion. How intense feeling was had already been made clear by riots and

mobs in New York city and elsewhere, which had broken up anti-slavery meetings and abused anti-slavery speakers. A Boston correspondent of the *Augusta Age*, signing himself "E. R.," writes, anent the proposed Convention, "Cannot the operation of these fanatics be at once crushed in the bud? Some effectual remedy should be applied to put a stop, and an immediate stop, to their proceedings." To which a writer in the *Mirror* replies by asking if "this is to be understood as a signal for rallying of a mob" at Augusta.⁵⁶

Political Attitude of the Convention? The *Boston Recorder*, writing of the proposed Convention at Augusta, calls attention to the point that the American Anti-slavery Society, by its original "Declaration" of principles and plans, is made a political party; that one of its avowed objects is to seek the termination of slavery "by political action," using the point as reason for keeping the subject of slavery out of the pulpit. So far as noted, the republication of this article in the *Mirror*⁵⁷ is the first intimation in Maine of a possible political phase of the anti-slavery movement, anticipating the formation of the Liberty Party in 1840, and of the Free-soil Party in 1848.

Meeting of the Convention, October 15, 1834. The much discussed Convention convened at the Court House in Augusta at ten o'clock A.M., on Wednesday, October 15. Rev. Thomas Adams, recently dismissed from a pastorate of sixteen years with the Congregational church in Vassalboro' and one of the most respected ministers in the State, called the meeting to order. Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, was chosen temporary chairman. Rev. Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor, and Rev. Joseph C. Lovejoy, were appointed a committee to make up the roll of the Convention. According to the Journal of the Convention thirty-two cities and towns, besides Bowdoin College and Maine Wesleyan Seminary, were represented by eighty-

⁵⁶ *C.M.*, Sept. 25, 1834, p. 26, article entitled "Recipe."

⁵⁷ Sept. 4, 1834, p. 14; cf. also the issue for Oct. 9, p. 35, an editorial on a letter from Rev. Amos A. Phelps.

eight delegates, the names being given.⁵⁸ The list would appear to have been incomplete since the name of Rev. George E. Adams, who was one of the most active participants in the business of the Convention, does not appear in the list. Another source, after giving the Constitution adopted, prints a list of one hundred seventy-seven names, probably attendants at the Convention, delegates and non-delegates, who signed the Constitution.⁵⁹ Mr. Adams was one of the ten men who subscribed to the communication quoted above, entitled, "The Convention at Augusta." With him appeared at the Convention Rev. Benjamin Tappan of Augusta, and Rev. C. H. Kent now of Freeport, but no others of the ten. A large number of the names on the roll are of those already mentioned as leaders in the anti-slavery cause in the State. Rev. Swan L. Pomroy headed a delegation of five from Bangor; Asa Redington, Jr., one of three from Augusta; Rev. Arthur Drinkwater, one of fifteen from Hallowell; Professor Calvin Newton, one of ten from Waterville; Rev. David Thurston, one of fourteen from Winthrop; Gen. Samuel Fessenden one of four from Portland, laymen only, at any rate no Congregational pastor; Bath was entirely unrepresented by delegates; the four from Bowdoin College were all undergraduates, though Mr. Willey lists Professor William Smyth, soon to be one of the doughtiest fighters in the State for the cause. In the list given by Mr. Willey are several other Congregational ministers apparently not delegates.

The committee to nominate permanent officers for the Convention were Hon. Samuel M. Pond of Bucksport, Rev. Arthur Drinkwater of Hallowell, and Rev. Thomas Adams, then living in Hallowell. Rev. David Thurston of Winthrop was elected President; Hon. S. M. Pond and Mr. Ebenezer Dole of Hallowell, vice-Presidents; Mr. Samuel K. Gilman of Hallowell, and Rev. Wooster Parker of Castine, Secretaries. A committee on overtures consisted of Rev. S. L. Pomroy of Bangor, Gen.

⁵⁸ *C.M.*, Oct. 30, 1834, p. 48.

⁵⁹ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 48 ff.

Samuel Fessenden of Portland, Rev. Stephen Thurston of Prospect (Searsport) and Professor Calvin Newton of Waterville. This committee at once moved that Benjamin C. Bacon, Esq., of Boston, Secretary of the New England Anti-slavery Society, Rev. Amos A. Phelps, agent of the American Anti-slavery Society, Rev. Cyrus P. Grosvenor, of Salem, Massachusetts, and Mr. George Thompson, an ardent and eloquent young Englishman speaking in America at the time in advocacy of the cause, all being present, be made corresponding members; and the four were unanimously seated.

The Constitution Adopted. This in itself was indicative not only of the composition and mind of the Convention, but of its decisions. The committee on overtures presented a resolution that "it is expedient to form a State Anti-slavery Society," which was passed unanimously. A committee to draft a Constitution was appointed, consisting of Gen. Fessenden, Professor Newton, Rev. Thomas Adams, Rev. George E. Adams, and Mr. Edward Southwick of Vassalboro'. This committee reported at the afternoon session a Constitution of six Articles and a Preamble. Article I, as presented, read: "This Society shall be called the Maine Anti-slavery Society, and shall be auxiliary to the American Anti-slavery Society." The matter of this last clause, excepting the matter of attitude towards the American Colonization Society, had been the storm centre of all previous discussion. A motion was made by Rev. George E. Adams to strike out the clause, and the rest of the afternoon was spent in the discussion. Mr. Adams was supported in his motion by Rev. Stephen Thurston of Prospect (Searsport) and Dr. LaFayette Perkins of Weld. Opponents were Gen. Fessenden and Rev. Swan L. Pomroy. Finally the motion was withdrawn, and the Article in its entirety as first presented adopted with only one dissenting vote.⁶⁰ The adoption of the clause was a complete victory for the friends of immediate emancipation.

Resolutions Adopted. On the other hand, resolutions were

⁶⁰ *C.M.*, Oct. 23, 1834, p. 42.

adopted disclaiming "all feelings of hostility towards our fellow citizens and brethren who hold slaves," moved by Rev. George E. Adams; condemning "any unkind or uncharitable language which may have been used by any of the friends of emancipation or their opponents," introduced by Rev. S. L. Pomroy of the committee on overtures; and another condemning also "individuals going from the free to the slave states, and there becoming the holder of slaves, as a crime against God and man of a deeper die than if they had been born and educated in the midst of slavery," also introduced by Mr. Pomroy. All three of these last were unanimously adopted. These all were most admirably drawn, and were plainly intended to mollify the "Moderates," and they probably reveal the calm and wise judgment of Mr. Pomroy, as already manifest in his pre-Convention utterances in the press. The remaining Articles of the Constitution were "taken up, debated, and unanimously adopted" the following day. During Thursday, also, resolutions were adopted approving measures "looking to the improving of the condition of our colored population," moved by Mr. Adams, of Brunswick; approving the establishment of "a manual labor High School," for colored children; requesting ministers favorable to the cause to present it, and take collections for it, "on or about the fourth of July of each year"; affirming that it was "no part of the plans and objects of this Convention to promote amalgamation of races"; expressing "high satisfaction over the formation of Female Anti-slavery Societies"; condemning "the domestic slave-trade as no less atrocious in the sight of God than the foreign, and equally worthy to be pronounced and treated as piracy"; and utterly disclaiming "all intention and purpose of forming a political party," all introduced by Mr. Pomroy, chairman of the committee of overtures.

First Permanent Officers. Permanent officers for the Society were elected as follows: President, Hon. Samuel M. Pond, of Bucksport; ten vice-Presidents, viz., Dr. Burleigh Smart, of Kennebunk; Samuel F. Hussey, Esq., of Portland; Samuel

Pickard, Esq., of Lewiston; Simeon Perkins, Esq., of Hebron; Prof. Calvin Newton, of Waterville; Dr. James Bowen, of Bloomfield; Rev. Stephen Thurston, of Prospect (Searsport); John Godfrey, Esq., of Bangor; William A. Crocker, Esq., of Machias; and John Buck, Esq., of Orland. Rev. George E. Adams, of Brunswick, was elected Corresponding Secretary; Samuel K. Gilman, Esq., of Hallowell, Recording Secretary; John Eveleth, Esq., of Augusta, Treasurer; Asa Redington, Jr., Esq., of Augusta, Ebenezer Dole, Esq., of Hallowell, and Stephen Sewall, Esq., of Winthrop, Executive Committee.⁶¹ These officers were well distributed over the State, and were all leaders in their respective communities.

Temper of the Convention. The activity of Rev. George E. Adams, of Brunswick, who was one of the signers of the communication by the doubters in the *Mirror* of September 11, is noteworthy. Apparently without the assistance of his fellow signers, and single-handed, he had attempted to prevent the association of the State Society with the American Society, and had signally failed, but he evidently was most active in the passing of resolutions which determined that the course of the State Society should not be with the extremists in the anti-slavery movement, and thus might attract to its support a far wider company, perhaps even some of the earlier group of his fellows. In any wise, immediately after the Convention he addressed a communication to the *Mirror* in which he spoke of the fine character of the addresses, the almost complete unanimity in the results of the Convention, and the true Christian spirit pervading all the sessions.⁶² The fundamental principle of the Society, as expressed in the second Article of the Constitution, as follows: "That slave-holding is a heinous crime against God and man, and therefore the Immediate Emancipation without the condition of Expatriation is the duty of the

⁶¹ See complete Journal in *C.M.*, Oct. 30, 1834, p. 48.

⁶² Cf. also the communication of "S." in the same issue of the *Mirror*, for Oct. 23, 1834, p. 42.

master and the right of the slave," he characterizes "as this noble, this truly Christian sentiment." "After much wavering," he rejoices that he had been led to attend the Convention. Addressing editor Cummings personally, he says, "And, Sir, had you been present, I think your hand would have been the first to *go up*, in *almost* every case."

If Mr. Adams' "conversion" from opposition, or at least doubt as to the "expediency" of holding the Convention, is notable, no less so is the fact that the editor of the *Mirror* makes only a four-line comment of satisfaction that "the spirit manifested is represented as excellent and conciliatory. Such a spirit we wish to encourage."⁶³ What Professor Smyth, of Bowdoin, thought, he characteristically expressed in an open letter to the editor a few weeks later.⁶⁴ It is such expressions from persons on both sides of "the agitating question" which give the best insight into the intensity of the feelings among members of the same denomination in the same State.

The "Moderates" Discomfited. As matters stood, the "Moderates" had been completely discomfited on both the major issues. The State Society was made auxiliary to the American Society; and the Convention, in Article II of the Constitution, had emphatically declared its stand for immediate emancipation "without the condition of Expatriation." The various resolutions met many of the minor issues of the "Moderates" in handsome fashion.

Mob Violence Attending the Convention. The apprehensions of some that the Convention might be the occasion (not the cause) of mob violence were fulfilled. The Rev. George Thompson, fresh from successes in the anti-slavery movement in England, was present and seated as a corresponding member of the Convention, as already noted. Of him, respecting the success of the anti-slavery movement in England, Lord

⁶³ *C.M.*, Oct. 23, 1834, p. 43; cf. the editorial in the issue for Sept. 4, 1834, p. 14.

⁶⁴ *C.M.*, Dec. 4, 1834, p. 66.

Brougham had said, "He has done more than any other man to achieve this most glorious victory." He spoke in Portland on Sunday evening, October 12,⁶⁵ in Brunswick on October 13, and at the Convention on October 15.⁶⁶ An Augusta paper had heralded his coming by characterizing him as a "mischief-maker coming across the ocean to teach Americans their political duties."⁶⁷ Mr. Thompson, in a letter written to Mr. Garrison from Portland, ten days after the Convention, writes as follows, "In the evening (of October 15), I delivered a somewhat long address. Was very hospitably entertained by the Rev. Mr. Tappan. Some remarks of mine, during the speech referred to, gave offence to a certain party in the town; and the first manifestation of their displeasure, was to visit the house of my host about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, and break nine or ten squares of glass."

"*Thursday*, 16. Attended the morning meeting of the Convention. A little before 2, was called out of the Convention by Mr. Tappan, and informed that *five gentlemen* were in an ante-room, waiting to see me. On being introduced to them, they said that they came from a meeting of citizens, that morning held, to inform me that my speech of the previous night had given great offence . . . that I was regarded as a foreign emissary, an officious intermeddler, etc., etc., . . . and that, therefore, I should not be permitted to attend the afternoon sitting of the Convention, but must leave the town immediately. I returned a calm and respectful answer, declining, however, to say whether I should comply with the 'Notice to quit.' At dinner I consulted with some friends, and it was finally arranged that I should abide at Mr. Tappan's until the remaining business of the Convention was transacted, and then retire to Hallowell, the neighboring town, and lecture there in the evening. . . . At

⁶⁵ *C.M.*, Oct. 16, 1834, p. 38. The editor was absent from the city, and could "not testify to what was said and done."

⁶⁶ *Letters and Addresses During His Mission in the U. S.*, pp. 12 ff.

⁶⁷ See letter of Rev. J. T. Hawes, of Topsham, a delegate, in Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 45 f., and 53 f.

7, I lectured in the Baptist church, Hallowell, to a very numerous and attentive auditory. A number of my opponents from Augusta were present. The people of Hallowell, however, had determined that 'no foreign interference' should prevent them from hearing my address. I was, therefore, permitted to lecture in peace."⁶⁸ From Hallowell Mr. Thompson went the next day to Waterville where he lectured in the Baptist church before "a very large auditory, including all the students from the College." On the Monday and Tuesday following he was in Brunswick, and the rest of the week in Portland, speaking in the Friends' meeting-house, the meeting-house of the Third Parish, and the Second Christian church.

The result of the Convention being a complete victory for "the immediate emancipationists," there was a temporary lull in the discussion in the press, except a disputatious interchange between the editor and "M." on the one side and Rev. Amos A. Phelps, of the American Anti-slavery Society, on the other.⁶⁹

The "Moderates" Organize. After learning of the result of the Convention at Augusta, it was but natural the "Moderates" should move for an organization with principles more after their own heart. The first step was taken in Boston. On Christmas Day, 1834, a call signed by eight men, among them Jacob Abbot and possibly one or two others originating, at least, in Maine, was issued for holding a New England Convention in Boston, January 14, 1835, "to consider the expediency of forming, and, if thought best, to form a Society for the Relief and

⁶⁸ *Letters and Addresses by George Thompson in the United States*, pp. 13 f., 1837. Mr. Hawes, in the letter quoted from above, says, "The whole Convention moved down to Hallowell—two miles—where we had a grand meeting in the evening, and the next day completed our business. The next Sabbath, Dr. Tappan preached a sermon which, if any of the mobocrats heard, they did not soon forget. The Doctor was a little timorous at first, but soon firm and decided." The Journal of the Convention does not even hint of a removal of the sessions to Hallowell. Cf. also a letter from Mrs. Simon Page in Willey, p. 53.

⁶⁹ *C.M.*, Nov. 6, 1834, p. 52; Nov. 20, 1834, p. 58; Jan. 8, 1835, editorial, p. 87.

Improvement of the Colored Race, by all wise and practical means.”⁷⁰

Convention in Boston Organizes the American Union. At the appointed time the Convention met, and organized as the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race. William Ladd, of Minot, a nationally known advocate of peace, and Phineas Barnes, of Waterville, were the only ones from Maine in a body made up of representatives from all the New England States, with the possible exception of Connecticut. Rev. John W. Chickering, of Bolton, Massachusetts, soon to succeed Rev. George C. Beckwith at the High Street church in Portland, was made secretary of the Convention, and, on formal organization, one of the two Secretaries.

Article II of the Constitution read: “The object of this Society shall be to promote, in all suitable ways, the intellectual and moral elevation of the colored race; and by disseminating information and exerting a kind moral influence, to convince all American citizens, that the system of slavery in this country is wrong, and ought to be universally abandoned (with the least practicable delay).” This last phrase was finally stricken out as possible of misinterpretation, as intimating immediate emancipation. The Constitution was confessedly a compromise, adopted by about one hundred yeas to four or five nays, three of which last were by negro members of the Convention. “The Union was planned to steer a middle course between the abolition societies on the one hand and the Colonization Society on the other.”⁷¹

Sometime after the meeting of the Convention the Executive Committee of the Union issued to the public a long exposition of its object and plans, carefully explaining its relationship to the American Anti-slavery Society and to the Colonization Society; announcing that they have “nothing to say respecting

⁷⁰ *C.M.*, Jan. 1, 1835, from the *Boston Recorder*.

⁷¹ *C.M.*, Jan. 22, 1835, pp. 94 f.

the propriety, or expediency, or even the duty, of political action for the relief of the oppressed people of color "; and, after detailing their plans for wide investigation, asking for the co-operation of the professed followers of Christ in the slaveholding States.⁷²

Evidently such a society of the "middle-of-the-road" men had been under consideration in Maine for some time, but its promoters had been anticipated in action by the call of the "immediate emancipationists" for the Augusta Convention, and so the former had waited to see what should be the outcome of that meeting.⁷³

An Organization of Maine "Moderates." On June 25, 1835, an informal meeting of ministers and laymen was held in Bangor "to consider the duty and expediency of forming a society in this State for the benefit of the colored race." The only persons known to be present were Rev. S. L. Pomroy, of Bangor, Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, and editor Cummings of the *Mirror*.⁷⁴ It was decided to call a Convention to assemble in the City Hall in Portland, on Wednesday, September 16, at 11 o'clock, A.M., the call being dated July 20, 1835, and being issued by a committee, appointed at the meeting at Bangor, consisting of Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of the South church, Augusta; Jacob McGaw, of Bangor; Rev. Silas McKeen, of the Congregational church in Belfast; Rev. Joseph Vaill, of the Second Congregational church in Portland; George Thatcher and James Crosby, both of Bangor; William Ladd, of Minot; Stephen Chase, of ?; and William Cutter, of Portland.⁷⁵ So far as they can be identified, all the committee were Congregationalists, either ministers or laymen.

On the day appointed, September 16, 1835, the Convention

⁷² *C.M.*, April 2, 1835, pp. 133 f.; see also *ibid.*, June 4, 1835, p. 170.

⁷³ *C.M.*, Sept. 4, p. 14, and Sept. 11, p. 19, 1834; cf. also a communication to the *Mirror*, Aug. 6, 1835, p. 205, signed "B."

⁷⁴ Cf. *C.M.*, Nov. 16, 1837, p. 58.

⁷⁵ *C.M.*, July 30, p. 203, Aug. 6, p. 207, Aug. 20, p. 8, and Sept. 10, p. 20, 1835.

met in the Portland City Hall, under the moderatorship of William Ladd, of Minot. There were seventy-four men present entitled to seats, all from the State except one from Connecticut, Selden Huntington; one from Northampton, Massachusetts, Samuel Hopkins; and R. R. Gurley, of Washington, D. C., agent of the American Colonization Society. Thirty-nine towns or cities of the State were represented, the largest delegation of fourteen from Portland, the next largest of five from Bangor; from Belfast, Brunswick, Falmouth, North Yarmouth, and Orono, three each; from Biddeford, Danville (Auburn), Gorham, Minot and New Gloucester, two each; from the remaining twenty-eight towns, one each. Of the seventy-one delegates from within the State, thirty-six were Congregational ministers. Portland alone sent three, Rev. Joseph Vaill, Rev. Sewall Tenney, and Rev. Asa Cummings, editor of the *Christian Mirror*. The following towns were represented by the Congregational minister only: Alna, Biddeford (by two), Boothbay, Camden, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Gray, Hallowell, Kennebunkport, Limerick, Limington, Lovell, Newcastle, Newfield, Saccarappa (Westbrook), Scarboro', Standish, Turner, Warren, Waldoboro', and Wells. Most of the possible thirty-five laymen were also Congregationalists, so far as the present writer's acquaintance goes. In short, the Convention was in the hands not only of Congregationalists, but of Congregational ministers. Most Baptist and Free Baptist ministers of the time were out-and-out Abolitionists. The Methodists of the State, at their Annual Conference in Bangor, the previous July, had passed a series of six resolutions of such an almost pro-slavery nature that there was no probability whatever that they would attend a Convention of even "Moderates,"⁷⁶ for they were still a country-wide denomination, the division into North and South over slavery not yet having come about.

The officers elected for the sessions of the Convention were William Ladd, of Minot, President; Alford Richardson, of

⁷⁶ *C.M.*, July 23, 1835, p. 198.

Portland, and William Bradbury, of New Gloucester, vice-Presidents; W. W. Woodbury, of Portland, and Rev. Edward F. Cutter, of Warren, Secretaries. The Committee on Overtures consisted of Joseph McKeen, of Brunswick; Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast; and Rev. Enos Merrill, of Alna. The Committee on Constitution consisted of William Ladd, Jacob McGaw and George A. Thatcher of Bangor, Rev. Joseph Vaill of Portland, and Rev. Silas McKeen of Belfast. Before the Constitution was brought under discussion the Convention passed a series of eight resolutions: viz., approving the sentiment expressed at the anti-abolition meeting held in Portland, on August 15, and by "similar meetings in other places," that "slavery is a moral and political evil," and affirming the constitutional right "of all citizens to discuss this or any other subject"; recognizing the "Savior's universal law of love" as applicable to masters as well as slaves; disclaiming all right, except that of moral influence, "to interfere with the legal relation of master and slave"; recommending "the elevation of people of color in intelligence and morality as likely to have a most auspicious influence on emancipation"; expressing a "readiness to cooperate with their southern brethren in sustaining missionaries and teachers for the slave, selected by themselves," i.e., by the southern brethren; tendering their "sympathy to any Society, formed on slave ground, for the instruction of slaves"; deprecating a censorious manner of urging the eternal principles of righteousness; and, finally, "deploring and disapproving unnatural excitement and mob-violence."

The Maine Union in behalf of the Colored Race. After protracted discussion it was voted expedient to form a Society. The Committee on Constitution reported the draft of a Constitution with Preamble. The latter was put for revision into the hands of a special committee. The revised Preamble, the Constitution of eight Articles, and an "exposition of the views of the Society on slavery," were adopted. The body was named

The Maine Union in behalf of the Colored Race. The object of the Society, as stated in Article II, was "the improvement of the colored people in knowledge and piety, and the final extinction of slavery, as soon as it can be done with the free-will and consent of the slaveholder." The Declaration of the views of the Society, appended to the Constitution, was under eight heads: disclaiming any interference with any association for the benefit of the colored race; affirming that the doctrine that man has a moral right to hold man as an article of property is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel; declaring that all friends of the country ought to take a deep interest in free people of color; that "all endeavors for the abolition of slavery should be directed solely to the master"; that it is "the duty of the slave, as inculcated by the benign principles of our holy religion, to be obedient to his master"; expressing "kind feelings towards such southern brethren as hold slaves"; declaring it the duty of the North to help bear the expense of liberation of the slaves; and, finally, disclaiming "all right of legal interference, by the government of the United States, with slavery in the southern States, without the consent of their legislatures."

The twofold object of the Union as expressed in Article II, and the enunciation of principles in the eight resolutions and the eight points of the Declaration appended to the Constitution were remarkably forecast in an editorial in the *Mirror*⁷⁷ the week before the Convention met. The editor, Rev. Asa Cummings, was not only a member of the Convention but chairman of the Committee on Resolutions.

The Convention, on nomination by a committee consisting of Rev. E. F. Cutter of Warren, Rev. Elijah Jones of Minot, and Rev. Silas McKeen of Belfast, elected the following officers: President, William Ladd, of Minot; ten vice-Presidents, one

⁷⁷ *C.M.*, Sept. 17, 1835, p. 23. The Proceedings of the Convention, with the Address to the Public by the executive committee, were published in Portland as a pamphlet.

from each county, the names of four only being given in the published account of proceedings, viz., Rev. Charles Freeman, of Limerick, for York; Alford Richardson, of Portland, for Cumberland; Bailey Pierce, of Belfast, for Waldo; and Jacob McGaw, of Bangor, for Penobscot. Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta, was made Corresponding Secretary; William Cutter, of Portland, Recording Secretary; Erastus Hayes, also of Portland, Treasurer. An Executive Committee of seven was constituted, as follows: Rev. Joseph Vaill, of Portland; Rev. J. W. Ellingwood, of Bath; Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta; Rev. J. W. Chickering, of Portland; Woodbury Storer, of Portland; James Crosby, of Bangor; William Cutter, of Portland. All, unless Mr. Cutter, were Congregationalists. With the exception of the first session in the City Hall, Portland, all the sessions, four in number, were held in the vestry of the Second Congregational church in Portland, of which Rev. Joseph Vaill was Pastor.⁷⁸ Naturally no mob violence threatened the even course of the proceedings of this "middle-of-the-road" Convention. How the poet, John G. Whittier, and others estimated it appears in a letter to the editor of the *Mirror*, for February 5, 1835.

Somewhat more than three months after the Convention, the Executive Committee of the Union, in imitation of the Boston Union, published a long statement, which, however, besides a list of questions for the purpose of eliciting information to guide further action, is only "a more copious exposition of the views and aims of the Union" as already given in the Resolutions and Declaration summarized above.⁷⁹

First Anniversary of the Union. The first anniversary of this Maine Union was held in Portland, November 2, 1836. No report of its proceedings was published in the *Mirror*, but, in

⁷⁸ *C.M.*, Sept. 24, 1835, p. 26.

⁷⁹ In the case of many who had been repelled by the extreme utterances of the *Liberator*, the organization of the Union at Boston and in Maine was hailed with high hopes, see *C.M.*, Apr. 22, 1835, p. 145, a letter from "B."

lieu of this apparently, a long statement from the Executive Committee. The most important part of the statement is in the introductory paragraph, and is so revealing of the situation in the country at large but particularly in the South, that the following considerable quotation is quite justified:

“ Your Executive Committee know not that during the year past they have exerted any influence in favor ” of the final extinction of slavery. “ Nor are they able to communicate any very cheering information with respect to it. . . . Hitherto the effect of agitating the subject of emancipation, in general, has been, not only to irritate those in whose hands the power is vested, but to call forth more vigorous efforts to defend and perpetuate the present system. From high places the doctrine has been advanced that slavery is an ordinance of God, that it lies at the foundation of the temple of liberty, that it constitutes an essential ingredient of the best condition of society; and with a large portion of the southern community these sentiments are understood to be popular. During the last year a new State [Arkansas] has been admitted to our confederacy, with the acknowledged right of holding slaves; and a strong desire has been expressed in certain parts of our country for the annexation of Texas, with the expectation, as it would seem, that to that territory also the same right should be extended. The government of Texas, in a proclamation that declares ‘ the African slave-trade ’ to be ‘ atrocious and disreputable, odious and abominable, equally revolting to the best feelings of our nature, and to the benign principles of the Christian faith . . . equally destructive to national morals and individual humanity ’ . . . has pronounced the importation, or admission, of Africans, or negroes, into the republic, to be piracy, ‘ from any quarter, except from the United States of America ’; thus according to our country the exclusive privilege of conducting with the Texans an atrocious, detestable traffic.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ *C.M.*, Nov. 10, 1836, p. 54.

No wonder the Executive Committee spends the strength of its report on "the leading design of the Maine Union, that of doing good in every lawful, practicable way, to the colored race, whether at the North or South, whether bond or free."

The course of affairs in the South had evidently been a body blow to this well meaning, mild tempered organization. It was reeling. But there was worse. Ten months before this report was issued, Governor McDuffie, of South Carolina, had addressed the Legislature of his State, in his annual message, as follows:

"No human institution, in my opinion, is more manifestly consistent with the will of God" than slavery. "I would as soon think of opening a negotiation for selling the liberty of the State at once, as for making any stipulations for the ultimate emancipation of our slaves. So deep is my conviction on this subject, that if I were doomed to die immediately after recording these sentiments, I could say in all sincerity and under all the sanctions of Christianity and patriotism, 'God forbid that my descendants, in the remotest generations, should live in any other than a community having the institution of domestic slavery, as it existed among the patriarchs of the primitive Church, and in all the free states of antiquity.' . . . It is my deliberate opinion that the laws of every community should punish this species of interference [i.e., abolitionism] *by death without benefit of Clergy*, regarding the authors of it as enemies of the human race. Nothing could be more appropriate than for South Carolina to set this example in the present crisis, and I trust the Legislature will not adjourn till it discharges this high duty of patriotism."⁸¹

Anti-slavery Meetings Mobbed. No wonder also that the speakers representing the American, and the Maine, Anti-slavery Society were met by mobs of southern sympathizers, and that not only in Cincinnati in August, 1836, and in Alton, Illinois, in November, 1837, but in Bloomfield, Maine, in No-

⁸¹ *C.M.*, Dec. 17, 1835, p. 75.

vember, 1835;⁸² in Denmark, Maine, in December, 1835;⁸³ in Portland, in September, 1836.⁸⁴ For the second annual meeting of the Maine Anti-slavery Society, appointed for October 26, 1836, the City Hall in Portland had been granted by the Mayor, but a meeting of citizens to protest, called the evening before, October 25, so overawed the Mayor that he "revoked" his consent, and the Society was obliged to hold their meeting, first at a private house, and then at the Friends' meeting-house, even so being assailed by a mob. The secretary of the meeting of protest was at the time "under indictment for being engaged in a riot at a meeting of Abolitionists some weeks before."⁸⁵

No Further Notice of the Union. The first anniversary meeting of the Maine Union would seem to have been also its last. At any rate, no other is reported. Of this first anniversary Willey reports, "The next year [after its formation] the Union met, but nothing had been done, and nothing further is known of it."⁸⁶ The wide difference between the principles of the Union and those of the Anti-slavery Society is very manifest. So far as the verdict of history is concerned, the order of the ends sought by the Union was a case of "the cart before the horse." But not only the rising tide of feeling in the South (of course, contrary to its intention) but the very stars in their courses were favoring the object of the Abolitionists, whatever mistakes they may have made in the spirit and manner of their warfare.

Rapid Formation of Auxiliaries of the Am. Anti-slavery Society. The American Anti-slavery Society, founded in December, 1833, is reported to have had two hundred and twenty-five auxiliaries in May, 1835; five hundred and twenty-seven in 1836; and about one thousand two hundred in 1837, with

⁸² *C.M.*, Nov. 19, 1835, p. 59; cf. Dec. 17, 1835, p. 75; Mar. 22, 1838, p. 132.

⁸³ *C.M.*, Dec. 17, 1835, p. 74.

⁸⁴ *C.M.*, Sept. 22, 1836, p. 27; cf. the statement of the Anti-slavery Society of No. Yarmouth (Yarmouth) in *ibid.*, Oct. 8, 1835, p. 34.

⁸⁵ *C.M.*, Dec. 8, 1836, p. 72.

⁸⁶ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 54.

a membership of not far from one hundred and twenty-five thousand.⁸⁷ The national Society in 1836, in a confessedly imperfect list,⁸⁸ reported for all New England two hundred forty-two local, county and State auxiliaries, of which thirty-four were in Maine, this number being exceeded only by New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. At that date, besides the State Auxiliary, there were reported to be auxiliaries in Cumberland, Kennebec and Oxford counties. In Portland there were three, a men's, a young men's, and a "female" society, organized in 1833 and 1834. In Brunswick there was one in the town and a second in Bowdoin College. Rev. George E. Adams, of the Brunswick First church, was secretary of the town auxiliary. Professor William Smyth was secretary of the Cumberland county auxiliary, formed in 1835 on call of six members of the Portland auxiliary. Rev. George Shepard was secretary of the local auxiliary in Hallowell. Out of the thirty-four reported as being in Maine in 1836, the date of organization of sixteen is lacking. Of the remaining eighteen, three were organized in 1833, viz., Bath, Hallowell and Portland; six in 1834, viz., Maine State, Mt. Desert, North Yarmouth (Yarmouth), Portland (Young Men's), Portland (Female),⁸⁹ and Winthrop; five in 1835, viz., Cumberland county, Fairhaven (), Gardiner, Gorham and Hebron; and four in 1836, viz., Buxton, Limington, Minot and Walnut Hill.⁹⁰ Additional county Societies, it is reported, were formed in Somerset, Lincoln, Washington, York, Franklin, and Piscataquis counties in 1838.⁹¹ A men's and a women's Anti-slavery Society were organized in Bangor and one in Bangor Seminary, in 1837.⁹² During the rest of this decade the same men who had been active in the formation of the Maine State Society continued

⁸⁷ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 35.

⁸⁸ E.g., the Society in Weld is not listed, see *ante*, p. 44.

⁸⁹ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 58; *C.M.*, July 20, 1837, p. 95.

⁹⁰ *Third Annual Report*, Am. Anti-slavery Society, pp. 89-93.

⁹¹ *C.M.*, Feb. 5, p. 124; Mar. 22, p. 131; May 31, p. 172; June 14, p. 179, 1838, and Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 83 f.

⁹² Willey, p. 118; *C.M.*, Sept. 14, 1837, p. 23, and Aug. 10, 1837, p. 2.

in its leadership, viz., Professor William Smyth, Rev. George E. Adams, the two Thurstons, S. L. Pomroy, George Shepard, Wales Lewis, J. T. Hawes, and other Congregational ministers, as well as laymen.

Address of the Cumberland County Society. Immediately after the formation of the Cumberland County Auxiliary in 1835, its members issued an "Address to the Citizens of Cumberland County," a document of noteworthy conciseness, vigor and cogency, withal of calm and temperate spirit. The most remarkable part of it follows:

"But while we rely mainly on the efficacy of these and similar moral means for the overthrow of slavery, we would not forget or conceal the fact that as citizens and christians we are no less responsible for the use we make of our political than of our other rights and privileges. The great value of the civil privileges by which we are blessed consists in the fact that we may, and when occasion requires it, are bound, in the fear of God, so to employ them as will best promote the happiness of our fellow-men, and the lasting security and honor of our country."⁹³

There was nothing the slave power in the South with its coadjutors in the North so much feared as the vigorous injection of the moral issue into politics. Already note has been made, even in the story of the Augusta Convention, of the general sensitiveness on the use of the issue of slavery in the political arena.

Multiplied Utterances of Local Conferences: 1. *Kennebec.* Note has already been made of the resolutions passed by the Kennebec Conference, first of all the Conferences, with regard to slavery.⁹⁴ A year later on September 23, 1834, the Conference had just listened to an address by Rev. Amos A. Phelps, agent of the American Anti-slavery Society, and had in prospect the Convention in Augusta, the following month,

⁹³ *C.M.*, Feb. 19, 1835, p. 110. No signatures were published.

⁹⁴ See *ante*, p. 40.

to consider the formation of a State Society. It was quite intelligible, therefore, that the resolutions now passed should be more explicit in statement and vigorous in sentiment. The fifth sounds like the utterance of the previous year, but the rest have an emphasis which is quite different. "Slavery is a violation of the law of God and is therefore a sin which ought immediately to be abandoned." "The present times demand a full and unequivocal declaration of this doctrine." "The going of men from free to slave states and becoming owners and holders of slaves, for filthy lucre's sake, merits the unqualified condemnation of all the friends of liberty and religion." "The withholding of the Bible, as a book to be read, from the slave population, is inconsistent both with the spirit of Protestantism and of genuine Christianity."⁹⁵ The wording of some of them recalls that of some to be passed at the State Convention at Augusta, and both may well have come from the same man or men, so vigorous and leaderlike were many of the men in the Conference. Again, a year later, on September 22, 1835, in a year which had been marked by intense activity of the anti-slavery forces throughout the North and a corresponding activity on the part of the northern anti-abolitionists, this Conference spoke again, this time addressing itself to the churches:

"Resolved: That, in view of the present, excited state of feeling in this country on the subject of slavery, it is the imperious duty of the churches to humble themselves before God, on account of the sin of this system, and earnestly to pray for its immediate removal, and to purify themselves from all its abominations."⁹⁶

Anti-abolition Meeting in Portland. The immediate reason for the words, "the present, excited state of feeling," was a meeting held on August 15th previous, in the City Hall of Portland, of those opposed to the abolitionists. It was "a very numerous assemblage of citizens," presided over by Gen. John

⁹⁵ *C.M.*, Oct. 9, 1834, p. 34.

⁹⁶ *C.M.*, Oct. 8, 1835, p. 35.

Chandler, Collector of Customs for the Port of Portland. A committee of twelve of the leading citizens presented a set of eight resolutions, with a long preamble, in which the anti-slavery activities were characterized as "the officious intermeddling of unauthorized individuals and self-erected societies in the non-slaveholding States, . . . hazarding the dissolution of the Union"; and it was declared "that the amelioration of the condition of the slaves and the final abolition of slavery in the United States are subjects for the exclusive deliberation and action of the peoples and legislatures of the slave-holding States." The resolutions were adopted as expressing the sentiments of the meeting. Rev. George Thompson, the English anti-slavery advocate was said to be in the city, and an added resolution stated, "That we highly disapprove of the officious interference of any foreigner with the domestic relations of any of the States."

It is not reported that the meeting was opened with prayer; and, so far as the report mentions the names of participants, that of any Portland minister is not given. The editor of the *Mirror*, in reporting the meeting from personal attendance, remarks, "We hope there is good sense, morality, and deference to the laws, still remaining among us, enough to prevent a resort to violence towards Mr. Thompson or any other man; but we foresee no good that can result from his lecturing here, and hope he will not be advised to attempt it."⁹⁷

The Kennebec Conference, at their meeting held in Gardiner in September, 1838, on motion of Dr. Tappan, of the South church, Augusta, passed a series of six resolutions declaring "slave-holding to be a great sin, the removal of which it is the appropriate duty of ministers and churches to attempt"; that, "as long as any of our countrymen at the North or the South excuse slave-holding, it will be a solemn duty to show the intrinsic sinfulness of the practice and to bear against it our decided solemn Christian testimony"; that "the churches which

⁹⁷ *C.M.*, Aug. 20, 1835, pp. 6 f.

give their sanction to this heinous sin have strong claims upon our compassion, and that we cannot innocently suffer the sin upon them"; that "peace secured by the sacrifice of principle and the neglect of duty is more to be dreaded . . . than agitation occasioned by proclaiming the whole truth in love." Prayer is urged upon the churches to the end of a speedy and peaceful termination of slavery.

These resolutions were at once a trumpet call to the churches and to Christians as to their Christian duty, and an unmistakable answer to those who cried peace when there was no peace. The responsibility of ministers and churches for emancipation was re-emphasized a year later.⁹⁸

2. *Hancock and Waldo Conference.* The first Conference to follow the example of the Kennebec was that of Hancock and Waldo, among the members of which were Rev. Stephen Thurston of Prospect (Searsport), a younger brother of Rev David Thurston, of Winthrop; Rev. Wooster Parker, of Castine, one of the secretaries of the Augusta Convention; and Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast First, soon to appear as a vigorous debater in controversy with one of the most able and astute pro-slavery advocates ever to present that side to the churches of the State. The presence of Mr. Thurston, and the tenor of the resolutions passed suggest that the Hancock-Waldo Conference was following the lead of Kennebec Conference, but by no means slavishly. The character of the resolutions passed shows that the churches bordering on the Penobscot were not so deeply influenced as the ministers and churches of Cumberland and Lincoln Conferences by their commercial relations with the southern planters and slaveholders.⁹⁹

At the meeting of this Conference held at Bluehill, October 7 and 8, 1834, Mr. McKeen, of Belfast, introduced four resolutions advocating immediate emancipation, expressing deep sympathy with the slaves, and deprecating all harsh speeches

⁹⁸ *C.M.*, Oct. 4, 1838, p. 33; cf. *ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1839, p. 53.

⁹⁹ See *post*, p. 78; and the statement of the No. Yarmouth (Yarmouth) Anti-slavery Society, *C.M.*, Oct. 8, 1835, p. 34.

and all abusive epithets regarding fellow citizens. The third resolution was the most notable, reading as follows:

"That we approve of all wise and prudent measures tending to deliver our country from the guilt, disgrace and danger of slave-holding, and to raise up our oppressed brethren of color to a full participation in all the privileges, both civil and religious, which we enjoy." ¹⁰⁰

Of course, they of that day could not foresee the necessity for amendments to the Federal Constitution, nor forecast the terrible reconstruction period.

The same Conference at their annual meeting at Ellsworth, two years later, passed a series of resolutions, introduced by Rev. Stephen Thurston, the second of which read, "That, while great numbers of professed Christians not only apologize for slavery, and speak and write in its defense, but also perpetuate its abominations, there is no good reason to expect the peaceable termination of the system." Here was a grim anticipation of the final court-of-appeal, revealing the spirit of the mover and the Conference alike. Another of the resolutions characterized American slavery as "a great social, moral and political evil, an outrage on human rights and an infringement of the prerogative of God." ¹⁰¹ These men were not unaware of the political bearings of the contest on which they had entered. The point of the "prerogative of God" was to have a more explicit treatment later in resolutions passed by the Franklin Conference. ¹⁰² The Hancock Conference did not speak again till their June session in 1839, the resolutions being again introduced by Mr. Thurston. ¹⁰³ At their fall session, at Mt. Desert, in October, 1839, further resolutions were introduced, the most notable declaring "that we regard any system of expatriation, without expressing any opinion as to its justice, as a totally inadequate remedy for slavery. — Passed *nem. con.*" ¹⁰⁴

3. *Oxford Conference.* Next followed Oxford Conference,

¹⁰⁰ *C.M.*, Oct. 30, 1834, p. 45.

¹⁰³ *C.M.*, June 20, 1839, p. 179.

¹⁰¹ *C.M.*, Nov. 24, 1836, p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ *C.M.*, Oct. 24, 1839, p. 46.

¹⁰² See *post*, p. 83.

the Conference of Rev. Charles Soule, of North Bridgton, and of Rev. Carlton Hurd, of Fryeburg, who had signed from Maine the "Declaration of Sentiment" prefacing Mr. Phelps' *Lectures on Slavery*; also of Rev. Joseph P. Fessenden, of South Bridgton. At the meeting of this Conference held at Otisfield, January 20 and 21, 1835, a resolution simply advocating "immediate abolition" was sponsored by Rev. Joseph Walker, of South Paris, and by Simeon Perkins, Esq., of Hebron.¹⁰⁵ This Conference did not utter itself again for two years. Meantime, in August, 1837, there appeared in the *New England Spectator* an article entitled, "Appeal of Clerical Abolitionists on Anti-slavery Measures," signed by five ministers of Boston and vicinity. It protested against the insinuations, denunciation and abuse which appeared so steadily in the columns of the *Liberator*, Mr. Garrison's organ. In resolutions passed by the Oxford Conference at its fall meeting of 1837, besides asserting that the sin of slavery calls for decided, yet *kind* rebuke from all the churches, it endorsed the position taken in the "Appeal," and commended "the document to the candid approval of all friends of the slave." The Rev. Charles Fitch, of Boston, who was apparently the leader of those who issued the "Appeal," later recalled his approval of the document.¹⁰⁶ The utterances of this Conference were never very positive or explicit.

4. *Penobscot Conference.* Penobscot Conference was the home not only of Rev. Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor First, and of Rev. Joseph C. Lovejoy, now of Orono, but also of Rev. Cyril Pearl, since his agency for the American Colonization Society pastor at Orrington. At the summer meeting of the Conference, held in August, 1835, in Mr. Pearl's meeting-house, a very brief resolution was passed, to the effect that "War, Licentiousness and Slaveholding are sins against God and man,

¹⁰⁵ *C.M.*, Jan. 29, 1835, p. 98.

¹⁰⁶ *C.M.*, Aug. 10, p. 3; Nov. 2, p. 50; Nov. 30, p. 67, 1837; Jan. 30, p. 103, 1840. Very characteristic are the comments of the editor of the *Mirror*, both on the "Appeal" and the recantation of Mr. Fitch.

inconsistent with the Christian religion, and ought to be universally abandoned, now and forever.”¹⁰⁷ Mr. Pearl, no longer in the employ of the Colonization Society, evidently felt free, with his fellow ministers, to express fully his deeper convictions. At a meeting of this Conference in February, 1836, a general resolution was passed, apparently without debate, condemning the American “system of slavery as palpably at variance with the genius of our Government, with natural justice, and with the great principles of the gospel of Christ”; and asserting that “all Christians are bound to pray and labor, in every suitable way, for its speedy and entire abandonment.”¹⁰⁸ At the meeting of the Conference held in Levant in June, 1836, the following resolution was introduced by Mr. Lovejoy:

“That we consider slavery to be a heinous sin against God, which ought to be speedily, universally and forever abandoned; and that we have never surrendered and never mean to surrender our right to discuss this subject in such a way and manner as, in our judgment, duty to man and God shall seem to require.”

Some objection was raised to the last part as “too pugnacious,” but, the objection not being insisted on, the resolution was adopted.¹⁰⁹ In it spoke for freedom of discussion a younger brother of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, who, a little more than a year later, was to give his life for the freedom of the press on the subject of slavery. The two brothers evidently were of one mind.

Again, in June, 1838, this Conference uttered itself in sentiment similar to its previous declarations.¹¹⁰

5. *York Conference.* The vigorous and uncompromising note in the resolution passed at the meeting of the Penobscot Conference in 1836 was wholly lacking from the series of eight resolutions passed eight months earlier by the York Conference at Biddeford, October 6 and 7, 1835, only three weeks later than

¹⁰⁷ *C.M.*, Aug. 27, 1835, p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ *C.M.*, Mar. 3, 1836, p. 118.

¹⁰⁹ *C.M.*, June 23, 1836, p. 182.

¹¹⁰ *C.M.*, July 12, 1838, p. 193.

the sessions of the Portland Convention which organized the Maine Union.¹¹¹ Indeed, one might easily surmise that the framers of the resolutions passed at the Convention were also the framers of those passed at the Conference.¹¹² These last affirmed slavery to be "a great moral and political evil"; asserted "the nation to be the guilty party, exposed to the judgments of God, which could be avoided only by a national repentance"; called upon philanthropists everywhere in the country to interest themselves in the subject; summoned the slaveholders "to use every safe and practicable means for its [slavery's] speedy removal"; declared the slaveholders to be "entitled to the sympathies, prayers and benevolent efforts of all enlightened Christian philanthropists"; asserted "no other than the most *kind* and *benevolent* feelings towards slaveholders" were to be cherished; declared it "the duty of the slave, submissively to yield to his condition, till in the providence of God the way is opened for his release from bondage in a peaceful manner"; and, finally condemned "the late illegal and riotous proceedings in many parts of the country."¹¹³

6. *Somerset Conference.* The Somerset Conference, though late in putting itself on record as to slavery, at its session at Mercer, June 20 and 21, 1837, made up in vigor for its delay, and in its resolution especially stressed the moral and religious aspects as follows:

"Whereas, The System of American Slavery is in principle a daring usurpation of the prerogative of God; . . . a denial of his right to be the Supreme Moral Governor of a class of human beings, more than two millions in number; . . . and is an obvious violation of the command, 'Thou shalt not steal,' . . . and leads to the extensive legal abrogation of marriage; and encourages adultery, and a multitude of other crimes, of which it is a shame even to speak: *Therefore,*

¹¹¹ See *ante*, p. 58.

¹¹² For the environment in York Co. cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 189 f.

¹¹³ *C.M.*, Oct. 15, 1835, p. 39.

“ Resolved : That the holding of human beings in servitude, on the principle that forms the basis of the American Slave-trade, the principle that the persons so held are the absolute property of their masters, is a sin against God and man, which ought to be immediately repented of, and forsaken by all to whom the guilt of it pertains ; and against which the churches, and especially the ministers of Christ, through the length and breadth of the land, should lift up their voice, boldly and unequivocally, in all suitable ways, and on all proper occasions.”

The resolution was introduced by Rev. George W. Hathaway, of Bloomfield, one of the signers of the Declaration in Mr. Phelps' book, and a steady and sturdy anti-slavery man, and was urged by Rev. Isaac Rogers of Farmington, Rev. Josiah Tucker of Bingham, and Rev. Ivory Kimball of Limington. A further resolution invited Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, agent of the American Anti-slavery Society, to lecture in the Conference, and assured him of cooperation.¹¹⁴

Somerset Association. At a meeting of the Somerset Association of Ministers held in November, 1837, the Association¹¹⁵ added to their preceding utterance in the Conference a series of four resolutions, the first, a part of the second, and the third, reading as follows :

“ Resolved, That in the opinion of this Association the above mentioned sin of holding slaves is one which nothing but a degree of ignorance, which cannot long be excusable, can render consistent with a credible profession of the Christian religion.

“ Resolved, That it is the duty of the churches not to recognize as one authorized to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, or to perform any of the peculiar offices of a Christian minister, any man who holds human beings in slavery, or justifies, defends and vindicates the system as in itself right. . . .

“ Resolved, That in our opinion the time has come when the

¹¹⁴ *C.M.*, July 25, 1837, p. 198.

¹¹⁵ This utterance is the sole expression of a Ministerial Association recorded in the *Mirror*. The Scribe of the Association was Rev. George W. Hathaway.

subject of slavery should be introduced into all our ecclesiastical bodies and fully discussed.”¹¹⁶ These resolutions were directed to be published in the *Christian Mirror*.¹¹⁷

It is possible that this last resolution was a reply to a communication in the *Mirror* some time previous¹¹⁸ from “A Member of the [Cumberland] Conference,” commenting as follows on a recent meeting of that body:

“The meeting was much as it should be. . . . Nothing was introduced to excite unhallowed feeling, or that would tend to produce collision of sentiment. . . . The mistake, not unfrequently made, in occupying much of the time of these holy convocations in dwelling upon the mere outworks of religion was happily avoided.”

Two years later, at a meeting at Bloomfield, September 17, 1839, the Somerset Conference passed the following fundamental resolutions:

“Whereas the doctrine that God is the Supreme Moral Governor of every human being, and ought to be immediately and universally acknowledged as such, is the vital and fundamental doctrine, on a tendency to promote the practical acknowledgment of which the entire moral value of every other doctrine of that religion depends, —

“Therefore, Resolved, That no system of religious belief so-called which denies this fundamental doctrine of Christianity can with any propriety be denominated the *Christian* religion.

“And, whereas the doctrine of American slavery is a denial of this fundamental doctrine of Christianity, it being the doctrine of American Slavery that a certain class of persons, called Slaves, are chattels personal in the hands of their owners so-called, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever,

¹¹⁶ On the matter of ministerial reluctance to preach on the issue see a vigorous letter by “A Brother,” “To Christian Ministers in Maine,” in *C.M.*, July 19, 1838, p. 197.

¹¹⁷ *C.M.*, Dec. 7, 1837, p. 71.

¹¹⁸ The issue for Jan. 19, 1837, p. 94; cf. the letter from “A Subscriber,” *C.M.*, Dec. 24, 1835, p. 80.

unable to *do* anything, *acquire any* thing, *possess any* thing, or *be any* thing, but what must belong to their masters, and are rightfully in the power of the masters to whom they are said to belong, and are, of course, not the subjects of any responsibility to God, but are subject to the authority of their human masters alone: —

“ Therefore, Resolved, That these persons of whose creed or belief the doctrine of American Slavery is a part, cannot be consistently recognized as believers in the *Christian* religion.

“ And, whereas the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper is an ordinance to which men are to approach solely as sincere and cordial believers in the Christian religion, and not as believers, however sincere, in any other system :

“ Therefore, Resolved, That mere membership in a church so called, by which, as a church, the doctrine of American Slavery is believed and maintained, is no evidence of qualification to come to the table of the Lord ; and that for Christian churches to extend to members of those churches so called, which, as churches, believe and maintain the doctrine of American Slavery, an invitation to come to the table of the Lord, *merely* because of their standing in those churches and without any other evidence that they are real and sincere believers in the Christian religion, is, in our opinion, improper in a very high degree.”

These resolutions were passed, but at once reconsidered by the mover and the Conference and referred to a special committee for report and discussion at the following meeting.¹¹⁹

Here, drawn out at full length, was the brief statement of the Hancock and Waldo resolution as to “ slavery being an infringement of the prerogative of God,” referred to earlier when considering the stand of that Conference.¹²⁰

The name of the mover is not given, but it is probable that

¹¹⁹ *C.M.*, Oct. 3, 1839, p. 34.

¹²⁰ See *ante*, p. 72, and compare the utterance of Somerset Conference, *ante*, p. 74.

the resolutions were formulated by the pastor of the entertaining church, Rev. George W. Hathaway, whose pastorate extended from 1833 to 1860. Granted the major premise of these resolutions, the logic is cogent; in any wise, here was an attempt to base abolition on an ultimate truth of religion.

7. *Cumberland Conference.* The anonymous expression of opinion respecting the meetings of the Cumberland Conference, noted above, would seem faithfully to reflect the general sentiments of this Conference. A careful survey of the reports in the *Mirror* of the meetings of the Cumberland Conference from 1830 to 1844 reveals no slightest reference to the subject of slavery. Apparently by common consent, or by the rule of a majority, the subject was excluded from the deliberations of the Conference during this fateful fourth decade of the century. Not till the meeting in June, 1844, were resolutions respecting slavery introduced, but even then by whom does not appear, as the clerk of the Conference, Rev. S. H. Shepley, of New Gloucester, makes no mention of them in his report of the meeting.¹²¹ His report of the fall meeting has this item, "The Resolutions on the subject of slavery, referred to a select committee at our last meeting, remain in the hands of the same committee to report hereafter."¹²² The committee never reported. Apparently, following a favorite parliamentary device to shelve a controversial topic, it never came out of Committee.

8. *Lincoln Conference.* The procedure in Cumberland Conference, the leading churches of which were, of course, in Portland, a commercial city with close business connections with the southern cotton growers and slaveholders, was almost paralleled in the Lincoln Conference, the leading churches of which were in Bath, another commercial city, with numerous southern connections.¹²³ At the summer meeting of this Conference, held August 15 to 17, 1837, at Woolwich, Rev. David Thurston,

¹²¹ *C.M.*, June 20, 1844, p. 186.

¹²² *C.M.*, Oct. 24, 1844, p. 50.

¹²³ Cf. the situation on the Penobscot, as stated in Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 94; p. 381.

of Winthrop, then an agent of the American Anti-slavery Society, was present and requested permission to speak. The permission was refused, the refusal¹²⁴ giving rise later to a spirited letter from Rev. Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor First, to the *Mirror*, entitled "A Marvel," to which the editor of the *Mirror* appends a vigorous and detailed reply.¹²⁵

The action taken by the Lincoln Conference had been preceded by distinct and repeated action by the Lincoln Ministers' Association, thus making it perfectly clear that the ministers took the lead at the Conference. Writes "C.—," in the *Mirror*,¹²⁶ in defense of the Conference, "In 1834, the Lincoln Association, embracing all the ministers in the Conference, voted with great unanimity that it was inexpedient to admit agents from abroad to discuss the subject of slavery in their pulpits. In 1835, after mature deliberation and discussion of the whole matter, they repeated that vote, and have never judged it proper to reconsider it. This vote has been stated again and again to agents desiring to enter the county, and, among others, to the highly esteemed brother who came to our last annual meeting." If the ministers acted with "great unanimity," it was not entire, as the sequel in the speedy formation of a county Society shows.

Earlier and for long Lincoln Conference and leading men in it had been staunch supporters of the American Colonization Society.¹²⁷

Lincoln County Anti-slavery Society. At the time of the Lincoln Conference action there was no county Anti-slavery Society in Lincoln county, though there had been one for Cumberland county since early in 1835.¹²⁸ A call was issued for a

¹²⁴ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 117, says the Lincoln Conference in 1838 refused to entertain an anti-slavery resolution.

¹²⁵ *C.M.*, Aug. 24, p. 10; Nov. 16, p. 58, 1837; cf. also a resolution of the Lincoln County Anti-slavery Society, in the *Mirror*, for Mar. 22, 1838, p. 131.

¹²⁶ Nov. 23, 1837, p. 62; cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 161, 190, 192.

¹²⁷ See *ante*, pp. 21, 24.

¹²⁸ *C.M.*, Feb. 5, p. 10; Feb. 19, p. 110, 1835.

county Convention to meet in the Methodist meeting-house in Wiscasset, on Tuesday, March 13, 1838, the call being signed by seven men: Rev. David Thurston, Rev. Thomas N. Lord, pastor of the Congregational church in Topsham, a layman from Brunswick, and four men from Wiscasset, including the M. E. minister, Rev. Asbury Caldwell. It was urged in the call that "Public discussions upon this momentous subject are adapted to elicit truth, awaken interest, and produce well directed and efficient effort." On the appointed date an Anti-slavery Society for the county was formed, auxiliary to the State Society,¹²⁹ and seventeen resolutions were adopted which were the most comprehensive, pronounced, and challenging of any yet noted in the development of the abolition cause in the State. If some ministers in the State were fearful of their place or influence if they spoke out boldly, there were others, and laymen also, who were not afraid. The men behind this Society declare themselves "enlisted during the war"; assert "that while the system of American slavery continues, all efforts for the salvation of the slave must be to a great extent ineffectual"; "that as slavery is a great moral, religious and political question, involving our best interests for time and eternity, neither our religious periodicals, the ministers of the Gospel, nor the members of our churches, can any more consistently maintain silence in reference to it than in reference to . . . licentiousness, or any other sin which has entered the world."

The great fight over petitions on the floor of Congress was in progress, and Hon. John Quincy Adams and others are commended for their stand; and it is asserted "That it begins to be seen and felt that slavery cannot survive free discussion; and that the question has at last come to this: Shall free discussion be tolerated and slavery abolished, or shall slavery continue and free discussion be put down."¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 83.

¹³⁰ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 61 ff.

The reader of these resolutions a century after they were adopted still feels the throb of indignation and zeal that prompted and passed them, and which foretokened the unflinching moral determination and the spirit of sacrifice that were to be evinced a quarter of a century later in four years of civil war.¹³¹

Of this county Society Col. Eben Hilton, of Wiscasset, was elected President; among the five vice-Presidents were Rev. John Boynton, pastor of the Congregational church in Phippsburg, the Methodist pastor in Newcastle, and the Baptist pastor in Topsham. The Methodist minister in Wiscasset was elected Corresponding Secretary. On the Executive Committee and its chairman was Rev. Josiah T. Hawes, now at Edgecomb, and a layman, Mr. Amasa Soule, from Bath. Mr. Hawes and the Methodist minister of the entertaining church in Wiscasset, Rev. Asbury Caldwell, constituted the Publishing Committee.¹³²

Lincoln Conference Finally Speaks. Not till August, 1842, at a meeting in Thomaston, did the Lincoln Conference put itself on record, in three mild resolutions, introduced by Rev. S. C. Fessenden, of the Thomaston church, and passed without discussion. These resolutions simply deprecate "any attempt to justify or palliate American slavery by the Bible"; reprobate "any law aiming or tending to deprive the slave of owning or reading the Word of God"; and assert that "the cause of the slaves continues to demand our sympathies and prayers."¹³³

9. Washington Conference. Chronologically the next Conference after Somerset to put itself on record was Washington, meeting at East Machias, June 6 and 7, 1838, in a brief and innocuous resolution, which, after some discussion, was unanimously adopted.¹³⁴ Three months earlier, on March 9, a

¹³¹ See an "expurgated" letter from Rev. Kiah Bayley, early of Newcastle First, but then in Hardwick, Vt., in "our placid *Mirror*," Nov. 29, 1838, p. 66.

¹³² *C.M.*, Mar. 22, 1838, p. 131.

¹³³ *C.M.*, Sept. 1, 1842, p. 17.

¹³⁴ *C.M.*, June 21, 1838, p. 182.

county Anti-slavery Society had been formed at Machias,¹³⁵ of which Rev. William Davenport, pastor of the Congregational church in Perry was one of the twelve vice-Presidents, and Rev. Thomas T. Stone, of the Congregational church in East Machias, was Corresponding Secretary.¹³⁶ The evening session, held in the Court House, was marked by a vigorous discussion, so prolonged that an adjourned session was found necessary. In the discussion Rev. C. C. Cone, pastor of the Methodist church in East Machias and one of the earliest and most outspoken Methodist abolitionists in the State, and Mr. Stone, did valiant service.¹³⁷ At the session of the Washington Conference held at Dennysville on October 3 and 4, 1838, a resolution of a tenor similar to that passed in June was adopted. This and resolutions on other subjects caused a discussion occupying the entire afternoon, a discussion which the clerk of the Conference reported as "interesting and it is hoped profitable."¹³⁸

10. *Union Conference.* Union Conference, organized in South Bridgton, June 14, 1836, with thirteen churches, three from Cumberland Conference and ten from Oxford, had among its ministers such early and decided supporters of the anti-slavery movement as Rev. Joseph P. Fessenden at South Bridgton, and Rev. Carlton Hurd at Fryeburg. At this meeting the Conference lost no time in passing a resolution condemning slavery as one among "the sins of our country which have become so many and aggravated as to occasion serious apprehensions for the safety of our invaluable institutions, and lead us to anticipate, without speedy repentance, the awful judgments of heaven."¹³⁹ Resolutions specifically on the subject of slavery, however, were not passed till the meeting of De-

¹³⁵ The meeting was held in the Congregational church, Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 87.

¹³⁶ *C.M.*, Apr. 5, 1838, p. 139.

¹³⁷ Willey, as before, p. 87; cf. *C.M.*, May 2, 1839, p. 156.

¹³⁸ *C.M.*, Oct. 25, 1838, p. 46; for later action, see *C.M.*, July 22, 1841, p. 202.

¹³⁹ *C.M.*, July 14, 1836, p. 193.

ember 25, 1838, at Waterford, when "the immediate abandonment of slavery as the imperative duty of the master and the dearest right of the slave" was emphatically asserted.¹⁴⁰ This Conference, at its meeting of December 27, 1837, at Fryeburg, had spent an entire afternoon in "services commemorative of the lamented Lovejoy."¹⁴¹

11. Franklin Conference. Franklin Conference was the newest in the sisterhood of Conferences, being organized at Strong, January 15, 1839, out of six churches formerly members of Kennebec Conference, and an equal number from Somerset Conference. With such men in the new Conference as Isaac Rogers of Farmington, George W. Fargo of Phillips, Samuel Talbot of Wilton and Simeon Hackett of Temple, it lost no time in putting itself on record in the matter of slavery in a series of three resolutions, the second and third of which deserve special mention. The third was, "Resolved, that the glorious intelligence from the West Indies¹⁴² clearly proves that the immediate emancipation of the slaves in this land would be not only patriotic, benevolent and just, but politic and safe for all concerned." The second was of peculiar interest in view of the action taken at the meeting of the State Conference in June of the previous year which will be noticed presently. The resolution of the Franklin Conference read:

"Resolved, that the connection which we sustain as Congregational churches with the Southern churches in having delegates from them to us, as corresponding religious bodies, clearly shows that in whatever way we may agitate and discuss the subject of slavery, we almost wholly fail of reaching their consciences until, as ecclesiastical bodies, we take up the subject, clearly express our abhorrence of the system, our tender sym-

¹⁴⁰ *C.M.*, Jan. 10, 1839, p. 89.

¹⁴¹ *C.M.*, Jan. 4, 1838, p. 86.

¹⁴² The freeing of some 600,000 slaves in August, 1838, two years before the time set by the Act of Parliament of 1833. See letters, in *C.M.*, Jan. 10, 1839, p. 92, on the results of the emancipation; and Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 124.

pathies with the down trodden and crushed slave, as well as with his guilty and yet enslaved oppressor, and our most fervent prayers for his instant repentance and abandonment of his course of legalized robbery and wrong.”¹⁴³

Here were no minced words. For a religious body it spoke as directly, forcibly and poignantly to slaveholder as it was possible for such a body to speak in terms of religion.

But this up-country Conference was not satisfied. At their next meeting, held in New Sharon, June 11 and 12, 1839, the following Preamble and Resolution were presented by Rev. George W. Hathaway of Bloomfield, of the Somerset Conference,¹⁴⁴ and were unanimously adopted:

“Whereas, the only object for which God has established a church in the world, and caused ministers to be ordained, is to promote the practical acknowledgment in its various branches of the doctrine that immediate and supreme subjection and obedience are due to Him from every moral and intelligent creature; and, whereas, American slavery is essentially a denial that such obedience and subjection are due to Jehovah, it being its fundamental and essential doctrine that God’s authority over the Slave is subordinate to the authority of man, and that the slave is a chattel personal in the hands of his master to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever: Therefore

“Resolved, that a church so called which opposes the immediate abandonment both in theory and practise of the doctrine of American Slavery is false to the only object of its vows which God has ever imposed on any of his churches as such; and that if a so called minister of the gospel opposes the universal and immediate abandonment both in theory and practise of the doctrine of American Slavery, he is chargeable with opposition to the only object of all the vows God ever requires of His ministers as such; which opposition, if it be

¹⁴³ *C.M.*, Feb. 7, 1839, p. 107.

¹⁴⁴ See a letter from Mr. Hathaway, addressed to the editor of the *Mirror*, and the editor’s very long reply, in the *Mirror* for Jan. 24, 1839, p. 97. Mr. Hathaway’s letter has the same vigor and directness as his resolution.

the result of wilful and deliberate design, proves him guilty of perjury of the blackest kind.”¹⁴⁵

Here was severe logical argumentation beginning with religious premises, and in its conclusions covering not only the slaveholding churches and ministers of the South, but their apologists among the churches and ministers of the North, of whom there were not a few. The utterances of this latest of the Conferences are on some accounts the most keen and pungent of all given out by the Conferences of the State.¹⁴⁶

Summary of Conferences. Thus by the middle of June, 1839, before this agitated decade was wholly over, nine of the eleven Conferences had spoken, true with varying definiteness, emphasis and pointedness, their condemnation of slavery. The tenth Conference, Lincoln, laggardly and reluctantly, was to speak in 1842. Cumberland was ominously dumb on the gravest issue yet faced in the nation's life.

Typical Expression from an Individual Church. Naturally, individual churches, as well as the Conferences, were expressing themselves on this great problem. Of such expressions it is necessary to cite only one or two as examples. As in the case of the Conferences there was great variation in definiteness and emphasis. The action of the church in Hallowell in forming the first known Anti-slavery Society in the State has been already noted. No pronouncement from this Society during this decade has been found; but “action spoke louder than words.”

Winthrop. In its report to the Kennebec Conference, meeting in Temple, September 22 and 23, 1835, the church in Winthrop is said to have adopted¹⁴⁷ the following article on the

¹⁴⁵ *C.M.*, June 27, 1839, p. 183; cf. Resolutions passed at a meeting of the Somerset Conference, Sept. 17, 1839, at Bloomfield, evidently the work also of Mr. Hathaway, *C.M.*, October 3, 1839, p. 34.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Somerset Conference, *ante*, pp. 74 ff.

¹⁴⁷ Aug. 20, 1835, see Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 55; and cf. *Mirror*, Mar. 18, 1841, p. 129; Oct. 4, 1838, for New Sharon; Oct. 19 and 26, 1843, for Hallowell; June 27, 1839, for Machias.

subject of slavery, and with it a resolution binding themselves not to receive a slaveholder as a preacher or a communicant at the Lord's table: "The church was organized to diffuse light in this dark world, to reform its wickedness, but it cannot do this while countenancing wickedness. It can never exterminate an evil while that evil is cherished in its bosom, nor will it ever be purified from any sin with which it lives in communion. It is understood that many professors of the religion of Christ hold more or less of their fellowmen in slavery. The light of the church should shine forth in its declarations and its acts. As the system of slavery in the United States annihilates the fundamental distinction constituted by God between *persons* and *things*, and drags down to the mere level of chattels more than two millions of beings created a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor, beings destined to immortality, clothed with intellectual and moral attributes which render them accountable to God; beings purchased with a Savior's blood, invited by the word of revelation and the Holy Ghost to a companionship with angels and to fellowship with God; we feel solemnly bound to bear our testimony against this sin, as the gospel of the blessed God forbids us to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." ¹⁴⁸

Here spoke doubtless the pastor of the church, Rev. David Thurston, of whom frequent mention has already been made, — early, steadfast and determined in his fight in behalf of the slave, and a leader who never hid his light under a bushel. As advocate of the cause, under the auspices of the State Anti-slavery Society, and of the American Society, he traveled far and wide over the State, in 1837 and 1838, helping establish new local Societies, debating with opponents, his meetings often broken up, or into, by mobs, and himself suffering contumely

¹⁴⁸ *C.M.*, Oct. 8, 1835, p. 33. See also the Resolutions adopted at Winthrop, July 4, and 5, 1836, at a meeting of the Winthrop Anti-slavery Society (because of the occasion, naturally, more political in tone), in *C.M.*, Aug. 11, 1836, p. 2; and similarly, Aug. 3, 1837, p. 206; and note editorial comment on p. 207.

and violence, but never flinching from his chosen task.¹⁴⁹ The resolution not to have fellowship with slaveholding preachers or even church members, thus early passed by the Winthrop church, set the example for similar expression by various churches and Conferences at a later date.

Position of the General Conference, 1835. Note has already been made of the first resolutions, very mild in character, passed by the General Conference of Maine.¹⁵⁰ The next year, 1835, at the sessions of the Conference held in Bangor, June 23-25, Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of the South church, Augusta, Recording Secretary of the Conference, introduced a resolution recognizing the difficulties attending every effort to remove slavery and calling for "a season of solemn prayer" of repentance for the guilt common to the entire nation, and of petition for guidance that "the enslaved be universally set free." Still more notable was a second resolution, "That it be recommended to the members of this Conference, and of our churches generally, to use their influence to have petitions extensively poured into Congress the present year, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia."¹⁵¹ This is one of the earliest references to conditions in the District of Columbia.

Conferences of 1836 and 1837. The following year Dr. Tappan introduced a resolution of a character similar to the first one he had offered in 1835.¹⁵² In the sessions of the Conference at North Yarmouth (Yarmouth) in 1837, the matter

¹⁴⁹ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 52, 58, 82, 116 ff.; *C.M.*, Mar. 3, 1836, a communication from "Windsor"; Apr. 27, p. 149; May 11, p. 157; May 25, p. 166; June 15, p. 178; July 27, p. 251; Aug. 31, p. 13; Oct. 5, p. 35; Nov. 2, p. 50, 1837; Mar. 22, p. 132, 1838; cf. *M.G.C.*, 1837, p. 14.

¹⁵⁰ See *ante*, p. 41. It must not be overlooked, in estimating the value of votes or resolutions by the State Conference, that it was not the democratic body it has been since 1894 when the representation came from the churches and not from the County Conferences; that the voting membership during the years from 1826 to 1860 never rose to a hundred and most of the time was only fifty or sixty.

¹⁵¹ *M.G.C.*, 1835, pp. 11 f.; cf. *C.M.*, July 2, 1835, p. 186.

¹⁵² *Report of M.G.C.*, 1836, p. 9; cf. *C.M.*, June 30, 1836, p. 187.

was passed over in silence.¹⁵³ Thus far the silence or even the character of the resolutions passed must have been more to the mind of the Moderates than of the members, now increasing in number, who were friends of immediate emancipation, much more of those who were of Garrisonian temper.

Conference of 1838. In 1838 the subject of slavery came in for more concrete and positive action. This was not strange in view of the facts that seven of the County Conferences, viz., Kennebec in 1833, Hancock and Waldo in 1834, Oxford, Penobscot and York, all in 1835, Somerset in 1837, and Washington prior to the meeting of the State Conference in 1838, had all spoken their minds, some with great vigor; that the previous two years had been a period of prolonged and heated discussion up and down the State and in the press; and, finally, that in November, 1837, had occurred an event which had agitated the whole land, the martyrdom at Alton, Illinois, of a son of the State and of a Congregational minister of the State, Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy. The situation shows how slowly a large body is moved to action even in respect of a matter of prime importance. At this meeting of the Conference, in the "Report on the State of Religion in the Churches," the report from the Somerset County Conference closed with this paragraph:

"One subject, that of removing the sin and wrongs of slavery from this nation, is awakening increasing interest, and receiving increasing attention . . . an interest and attention, too, which it is hoped that neither the pecuniary pressure,¹⁵⁴ nor any other pressure, will suppress, until the sin and the evils resulting from it be removed, and the oppressed be permitted to go free." Who had written this report does not appear from the report of the State Conference but the scribe of the Somerset Conference was Rev. George W. Hathaway, of Bloomfield, from the outset a vigorous Abolitionist. The delegates present from

¹⁵³ Cf. *M.G.C.* for 1837, and *C.M.*, July 27, 1837, p. 202.

¹⁵⁴ 1837 was the beginning of the great financial crisis, by far the greatest the country has ever experienced.

Somerset Conference in the State Conference were Rev. Levi Loring of Anson and Athens, and Rev. Josiah Tucker of Bingham. Probably by these delegates a communication from the Somerset Conference was introduced containing resolutions as to slavery; and the motion was made that a select committee be raised, to whom this communication, and others on the same subject (of which the report says nothing), might be submitted. This committee afterwards reported as follows:

“Whereas the General Conference of Maine has repeatedly expressed its views respecting the evils of Slavery, we consider unnecessary any such repetition of those views at our present session as would seem to be desired by our brethren of the Somerset Conference.

“Yet, we suggest to the Conference the expediency of raising a select committee, whose duty it shall be, to consider whether a friendly correspondence, with Ecclesiastical bodies of slaveholding States, upon the subject of Slavery, would give promise of good; and if, in their opinion, it would, to pursue such correspondence accordingly . . . to be reported to the Conference at its next annual meeting.

“The Committee also recommended unanimously (for special and urgent reasons) that the proposition herein submitted be adopted or rejected by Conference without discussion.”

The preliminary committee who made this report are not named. That they considered unnecessary a repetition of such mild views as the Conference had already expressed might well be said to be quite intelligible, but this was not what the Somerset Conference wanted, as may well be inferred from a consideration of the resolutions they had already passed at their session at Mercer the previous year, and especially those passed at the meeting of the Somerset Association of Ministers in November, 1837. This latter body wanted the matter “introduced into all our ecclesiastical bodies and fully discussed.”¹⁵⁵ Now, it was just this “full discussion” which the State Con-

¹⁵⁵ See *ante*, pp. 75 f.

ference committee evidently did not want, and so recommended "for special and urgent reasons" to have their proposal itself "adopted or rejected — without discussion." That is, the procedure which had shelved the whole matter in the Cumberland and Lincoln Conferences was being attempted, apparently, at the State Conference.

Appointment of a Committee of Correspondence. The report of the committee was, however, adopted, and the following seven men were appointed on the permanent select committee, Rev. Messrs. William Allen, D.D., then President of Bowdoin College; Rev. Benjamin Tappan, D.D., of Augusta; Rev. J. W. Chickering, of High Street church, Portland; Rev. Asa Cummings, editor of the *Christian Mirror*; Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast First; Rev. William T. Dwight, of Portland Third; and Rev. Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor First. The Moderator for the Conference, who probably named the committee, was Rev. J. W. Ellingwood, of Bath First, in the Lincoln Conference. Of the seven members of the committee, four were from Cumberland Conference, viz., Messrs. Allen, Chickering, Cummings and Dwight. Mr. McKeen and Dr. Tappan were among those who had called and managed the Portland Convention which had formed the Maine Union. This left Mr. Pomroy of Bangor the only pronounced abolitionist. The commission given the committee was of the most cautious and non-committal character: "They were to consider whether a friendly correspondence with ecclesiastical bodies of slaveholding States on the subject of slavery would give promise of good." It was left to the committee's own judgment whether they act or not, and the Conference was thus free from the prickly subject for at least a year. At any rate, the Conference could take the matter or leave it — there was to be no discussion.

Conference of 1839. The committee of seven saw fit to enter into correspondence with certain southern ecclesiastical bodies, which (except in one case), and how many, does not appear from the report made to the Conference at Brunswick in June, 1839,

through Rev. Asa Cummings of the *Mirror*.¹⁵⁶ It was evidently a long report since it occupied in the reading parts of two sessions, but the report was not made a part of the printed record. After the report was finished, the Conference voted, "That the letter from the Tombeckbee Presbytery . . . be printed, together with an answer to the same, and forwarded to the above-named Presbytery with the request that they will publish it." This, as a result, delayed publication for more than a year. A letter received by the committee from another Presbytery was to be published by consent of that Presbytery.¹⁵⁷

Though the report of the Conference sessions in the *Christian Mirror* fills seven closely printed columns in one issue, and also the following week nearly two more, all by the editor himself, the only reference to the report of this committee was as follows:

"Among these [sundry reports] the committee to correspond with southern ecclesiastical bodies on the subject of slavery [reported] in part, . . . the latter portion of the report was among the last doings of the Conference. This correspondence has developed one fact, viz., this exciting subject can be written upon with a calm and kind spirit, both by slaveholders and those who oppose Slavery."¹⁵⁸

Extra-Conference Movements, 1839. In spite of editor Cummings' "one fact developed," viz., "that this exciting subject could be written about with a calm and kind spirit," there were two other "facts" (using the word in its literal sense) in connection with that meeting of the Conference which indicated there were those who were by no means satisfied with the handling of the "exciting subject" given it by the select committee. From the printed minutes it would appear that, in spite of the Conference having a committee at work, further resolutions on slavery had been presented to the Conference, by whom is not

¹⁵⁶ Probably they were only Presbyterian bodies.

¹⁵⁷ *M.G.C.*, 1839, p. 18. The correspondence was not published till November, 1839. For consideration of it see *post*, pp. 95 ff.

¹⁵⁸ *C.M.*, July 4, 1839, pp. 190 f.

stated. It was moved by the chairman of the Committee of Arrangements that they be submitted to a committee of the Conference to report at the next meeting, — avoiding again for a year the discussion of the dangerous topic, but a motion for indefinite postponement passed affirmatively disposed of it altogether. Evidently, the majority of the Conference was not minded “to grapple the nettle.”¹⁵⁹ The other “fact,” however, is immensely more significant. On the morning of the opening of the Conference of 1839, June 25, in Brunswick, pursuant to a call previously sent out, a Convention of Congregational ministers and members was held in the Conference Room of the church, a small chapel on Center street, Brunswick, built by the church in 1823. The meeting was called to order by Rev. Allen Greeley, pastor from 1810 to 1834 at Turner, in Oxford Conference. The meeting was organized by electing Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, Moderator, and his brother, Rev. Stephen Thurston, of Prospect (Searsport), Scribe. A Committee of Arrangements was constituted of Rev. Messrs. David Thurston, William Smyth, of Bowdoin, Jotham Sewall, Jr., of Newcastle First, Carlton Hurd of Fryeburg, and Josiah T. Hawes. Messrs. Thurston, Smyth, Hurd and Hawes were all early and strong supporters of the State Anti-slavery Society. Mr. Sewall of Newcastle had been a delegate to the meeting in Portland which formed the Maine Union. This committee having been appointed, the Convention adjourned to meet after the close of the meeting of the Conference. At that time they first met in the Conference Room, but immediately adjourned to the meeting-house. Here the Committee of Arrangements presented eight resolutions which were discussed “at great length” and “unanimously adopted.” Of the eight, the three first were general. The fourth said, “We do not claim for women the privilege of voting and acting with men in public assemblies, but, on the contrary, consider such practices as indecorous and unscriptural, and the introduction of them at the

¹⁵⁹ *M.G.C.*, 1839, p. 17.

anti-slavery meetings as a party measure." Such a resolution today would seem absurd, but not so a century ago when Paul's dictum was "gospel," and when the advocacy of the anti-slavery cause by women in public meetings was favored by Garrison and his followers,¹⁶⁰ this being one of the reasons on the part of the *Christian Mirror* and many most estimable persons for opposing him and the cause as he presented it. The fifth resolution was an affirmation "that civil government is ordained of God," in refutation of the Garrisonian position that the government of the United States, according to the Constitution, recognized and in a sense protected slavery, and therefore the Constitution was "a covenant with death" and "an agreement with hell." The sixth resolution wished it "distinctly understood that we give no countenance to any resort to physical force in procuring the abolition of slavery."

The fourth, fifth and sixth resolutions, therefore, were an attempt on the part of the promulgators of the list to dissociate themselves from extreme "Garrisonism" and thus to meet the objections of the *Mirror* and others to the American Anti-slavery Society.

These men, however, had their courage with them, and so the seventh resolution, which was really the chief of the whole list, proceeded to declare, in view of the position long taken by the editor of the *Mirror*, and of the suppressive procedure of the State Conference, as follows: "Resolved, That, as Congregational ministers and church members, we have now, and for a long time have had, real ground of complaint against the *Christian Mirror* on the subject of slavery; and that a committee be appointed to take this whole subject into consideration, kindly conferring with its Editor, and report at an adjourned meeting of this Convention, which shall be holden after the next annual meeting of the General Conference."¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ The American Anti-slavery Society, in 1839, after a long discussion, admitted women on the same footing as men. The action split the Society, and resulted in the formation of the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 108 f.

It must be explained that the *Mirror* was not private property but, since 1833, was owned and under the care of the Maine Missionary Society, hence really of the churches in general, so that the group were wholly within their rights to complain of the course pursued by the Editor.¹⁶² In fact, no one can follow through the editorials of the *Mirror* during this decade of the thirties, and not perceive how persistently and annoyingly, as only the editor of a current publication has the opportunity, the editor had criticized, or belittled, or openly opposed, the abolition movement and almost all its supporters in State and Nation. It is true that he was the target continually of the criticisms and vituperative attacks of Garrison and the *Liberator* in Boston, and the scarcely less annoying buzzing and stinging of Austin Willey and the *Advocate of Freedom* right in the State; but, even after a hundred years, the careful reader of the *Mirror* cannot but feel how great a disadvantage the out-and-out abolitionists in the denomination labored under by the attitude and persistently critical utterances of the editor of the only State denominational organ which they and their churches had, and were expected loyally to support. Hence their eighth and last resolution, "Resolved, That it is not the wish of this Convention to curtail the circulation of the *Mirror*, nor to displace the Editor, but only to have its tone and character corrected in reference to the anti-slavery cause and its advocates, so as no longer to cast undeserved odium on them."

In pursuance of the seventh resolution a committee was appointed consisting of Rev. David Thurston, Rev. Benjamin Tappan, Rev. Charles Freeman, Professor William Smyth, and Rev. Silas McKeen. The constituency of the committee is most revealing. Mr. Thurston and Professor Smyth were original supporters of the State Anti-slavery Society, but the three others, with the editor of the *Mirror* and, of course, others, had

¹⁶² Dr. Cummings became the proprietor as well as editor of the *Mirror* in 1845, see *Mirror* for July 10, 1845, p. 198.

helped to form the Maine Union, the society of the "Moderates," at Portland. Apparently, after the death of that ephemeral organization because of the futility of its compromising methods and concessive spirit, these three had seen new light, and, earnest anti-slavery men as they originally were, did not propose to be led into the wilderness again. To oppose the editor of the *Mirror* was no new move on the part of Professor Smyth, since the two had already had several tilts.¹⁶³

The final action of the Convention was to vote that its doings should be published in the *Mirror* and the *Advocate of Freedom*. The record appeared in the *Advocate* one week, and the following week in the *Mirror*, — in the latter accompanied by a thoroughly characteristic sarcasm flung by the editor at the *Advocate*, at the *Convention*, and at some women who had ventured to write the editor in defense of the rights of their sex.¹⁶⁴ The committee appointed to confer with editor Cummings probably did their duty, with what effect there is no record. So far as the editor's course was concerned, it does not seem to have been modified.¹⁶⁵ The Board of Trustees of the Maine Missionary Society continued to be constituted in majority of members from Cumberland and Lincoln Conferences. Whether the Convention met the following year in connection with the meeting of the General Conference as voted, is not recorded.

Correspondence with Other Ecclesiastical Bodies. The committee of correspondence with other ecclesiastical bodies on the matter of slavery, appointed originally in 1838 and making its first report at the Conference meeting of 1839 at Brunswick, at this latter meeting was "reappointed, and instructed further to prosecute this good work." The chairman of the committee, President William Allen, of Bowdoin, having resigned the presidency and removed to Massachusetts, his

¹⁶³ E.g., see *C.M.*, Dec. 4, 1834, p. 66.

¹⁶⁴ *C.M.*, July 11, 1839, p. 195.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *C.M.*, Apr. 4, 1844, p. 142.

place on the committee was taken by Rev. Jonathan B. Condit, of Portland Second. This left the membership of the committee, as it had been, in majority from the Cumberland Conference. The committee reported again at the meeting of the State Conference held in Hallowell in June, 1840, again through editor Cummings. Meantime, the correspondence between the committee and the Tombecebee Presbytery in Mississippi, consisting of the original letter to the Presbytery, the reply by the Presbytery, and the answer to this reply made by the committee at the hand of Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast, had been printed in full in the *Mirror* for November 21, 1839, occupying three-quarters of a whole issue of the *Mirror*.

Original Letter. The original letter addressed to the Presbytery was written by editor Cummings for the committee, and was dated Portland, December 28, 1838,¹⁶⁶ a full six months after the committee had first been appointed. The original letter opens with a long explanatory, almost apologetic introduction, making up a full half of the letter. The burden of the letter is in the paragraph, "To act understandingly on this subject, we feel the need of more knowledge, drawn from original and unexceptionable sources,—knowledge on which we can depend." Then follows a paragraph of eight or ten questions about slavery and slaves in relation to the church and church members. These questions are asked "not as judges or censors, but as brethren of the same family." The letter closes with a paragraph of explanation of the situation in Maine as seen by the committee, as follows in part:

"It is proper that you should know that in regard to what is called the 'northern abolition movement,' we are divided in opinion; some in our churches have warmly espoused it, and others being as warmly opposed, or indifferent. But the conviction, and feeling, is universal among us that slavery is a great evil; and nearly so, that slaveholding is a crime."

¹⁶⁶ The date appended to the letter in the *Mirror* for Nov. 21, 1839, is wrong, as appears from the introductory note.

The Reply. The reply to this letter, it was tacitly understood, was to be used as the basis of some action on the part of the State Conference with regard to fellowship with the southern Presbyterians, the two bodies having had relations of correspondence since the origin of the State Conference in 1826.

The reply, coming from the Tombecbee Presbytery by the hand of its Stated Clerk, was dated April 9, 1839, at Starks-ville, Mississippi. The introduction refers to the delicacy of the subject, daily becoming more so, through the agitation regarding it in the country. The letter of inquiry having referred to the attitude of a majority of the local Conferences as being opposed to slavery on the ground of both natural and revealed law, the Presbytery states that it does not understand what is meant by "natural law," and declares that "it is willing to be guided by the Bible," which it supposes is what is meant by "revealed law." It then proceeds to give a brief summary of its view of the teaching of the Bible, directly and by inference, regarding slavery, citing, according to the universal custom of the time, the appropriate proof texts. Slight reference is made to other than the biblical aspects of slavery.

The Conference of Maine was requested to publish entire the reply of the Presbytery "with the addition of the Scriptures referred to," such publication having been desired by the committee of correspondence.

The Answer. The "Answer" to the "Reply" of the Presbytery is from the committee by the hand of Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast, and is a long (occupying fourteen closely printed columns of the *Mirror*) and, according to the exegetical understanding of the time, a very intimate and able discussion of biblical teaching as regards slavery.¹⁶⁷ As regards Jewish servitude, it is asserted, "There is no sufficient proof to warrant belief, that the Hebrew laws ever authorized, or in any way

¹⁶⁷ In 1841 Mr. McKeen was dismissed from Belfast First, and went to Bradford, Vt., where he issued a pamphlet on the "Scriptural Argument," which was widely circulated, see Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 335.

recognized, slavery in the American sense of that term." As in connection with the Old Testament, so in the case of the New Testament, the Presbytery is taxed with confusing everywhere the word servant with that of slave, though the committee admits that the Greek word translated "servant" may sometimes signify a slave or bondservant. The allegation is made, as regards the teaching of Jesus, that "the fact that slavery is not expressly mentioned as a damnable sin gives it no justification." As regards apostolic teaching, the "Answer" denies that "the apostles said anything that justifies the existence of slavery among a Christian people." On the contrary, slaveholding is condemned by the biblical teaching in general, and especially by the Golden Rule. Finally, the Presbytery's contention that southern slavery is a benevolent institution is refuted with vigor and feeling.

Two quotations from the conclusion of this by far the most explicit as well as extended utterance authorized by the State Conference, will give an idea of their broad understanding of the momentousness of the issue, and of the depth of their feeling.

"Nor is the question in debate one of merely speculative interest; a question which may be decided either way without affecting human rights and happiness; but one on whose determination, by the general voice of mankind, the most valued interests of our race must, not only now, but in every coming age depend. Most of the questions of right and honor which have been contested among the nations, and been settled on fields of battle drenched in blood, have been trivial indeed in comparison with this." "O Sirs, the doctrines of slaveholders are fearfully dangerous doctrines." This "Answer" was unanimously adopted and "sent to every southern Presbytery, and to several leading individuals in the slaveholding States."¹⁶⁸

Meetings of 1840 and 1841. The committee was highly commended by the Conference for their performance of the

¹⁶⁸ *M.G.C.*, 1848, p. 22; cf. editorial in *C.M.*, Nov. 14, 1844, p. 62.

task assigned them; "solemn prayer" was offered "that their able defense of the truth in regard to slaveholding may be followed by the special blessing of heaven";¹⁶⁹ and the committee was continued "to make suitable replies to any communications that may be received during the coming year." Apparently no further communications were received, for, if the committee reported the next year at Machias, as they probably did, no note is made of it in the printed minutes. At this meeting of 1841, the committee was continued, and only a brief, general resolution respecting slavery was passed.¹⁷⁰ So far as Conference action was concerned, the correspondence with the Tombechee Presbytery would seem to have convinced it that it was face to face with an insuperable obstacle in the case of at least southern Presbyterians. It probably felt like saying with Hosea, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Matters had gotten nowhere,¹⁷¹ and for three years the meetings of the Conference were marked only either by mention of the enslaved in prayer, as in 1842, or by a prepared address on slavery, in 1843 by Rev. Dr. Tappan of Augusta, and in 1844 by Rev. Charles Packard, corresponding member of the Conference from the General Association of Massachusetts.¹⁷²

A Constitutional Objection to the Correspondence. An interesting aftermath of this correspondence between the Maine General Conference and the Tombechee Presbytery was the challenging of the right of the Conference to enter upon such a correspondence as unauthorized, indeed improper, in view of the statement in the ninth article of the Constitution of the Conference, reading, "No ecclesiastical power or authority shall ever be assumed by the General Conference, or be delegated to it," and in the eighth article, reading, "The object of

¹⁶⁹ *M.G.C.*, 1840, p. 5. See *C.M.*, June 25, 1840, p. 186, for an endorsement of the action of the State Conference by the Franklin Conference.

¹⁷⁰ *M.G.C.*, 1841, pp. 4 f.

¹⁷¹ At the meeting of 1843, at Bangor, the subject of correspondence with other bodies, probably over slavery, was deliberated upon, but no action taken; cf. *M.G.C.*, 1843, p. 7.

¹⁷² *M.G.C.*, 1842, p. 10; 1843, p. 4; 1844, p. 4.

the General Conference shall be to promote intercourse and harmony among the churches of the State." In view of the latter, it was urged that the correspondence of the Conference on so controverted a topic as slavery could not, and did not, conduce to harmony among the churches of the State; and in view of the former, the approach thus to the churches in the South was practically the first step in a process of ecclesiastical discipline likely to lead to censure, and as a Conference of Congregational churches, both because of the explicit prohibition of the Constitution and because of the general, fundamental principle of Congregationalism, the Conference was taking a course it had no right to take. The protagonist of this view was Rev. John W. Ellingwood of the First, or North church of Bath. To his letter to the *Mirror*,¹⁷³ the editor, himself a member of the committee of correspondence, made a brief reply, and invited other replies. Such replies were forthcoming from Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta South, and from Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast First, the writer of the "Answer" to the "Reply," both in good spirit, and cogent in their argument. To these replies Mr. Ellingwood made extended rejoinders, and Dr. Tappan replied to Mr. Ellingwood's second communication.¹⁷⁴ The chief points made against Mr. Ellingwood's letters were that the articles in question were never intended to shut out fraternal correspondence, and that it was quite essential that the question of slavery should be threshed out, especially in its relation to the Bible, stress upon which had been laid by the southern Presbytery. At this distance of time one cannot but surmise that Mr. Ellingwood's real reason for his contention was his reluctance as a pastor in a commercial city like Bath to have the question of slavery stirred at all, since he was one of the leaders in throwing doubt on the advisability of forming a State Anti-slavery Society.

¹⁷³ May 21, 1840, pp. 166 f.

¹⁷⁴ *C.M.*, June 4, p. 175; June 11, pp. 177 f.; June 18, pp. 181 f.; June 25, p. 185, 1840.

The State Anti-slavery Society Establishes a Paper. The sixteenth resolution in the notable series of seventeen issued by the Lincoln County Anti-slavery Society, at its formation in Wiscasset in 1838,¹⁷⁵ reads thus, "That we approve the effort of the Maine Anti-slavery Society, to establish a semi-monthly paper as a medium of communication, through which abolitionists may 'expound their principles, state their views, and urge their measures'; and that we pledge to each other and to the State Society our efforts to extend its circulation in our respective towns."

The Advocate of Freedom. For four years the State Society had been without its own organ, and was dependent upon such notice as was given it by the secular press, almost wholly hostile, or as was more or less grudgingly accorded it in a religious paper as critical as the *Christian Mirror*. The question of such a paper was first raised at the third annual meeting of the Society, held in Augusta, January 31 to February 2, 1838. Here the matter was referred to a committee which reported favorably to the establishment of a Society organ. Accordingly, *The Advocate of Freedom* was begun, the first issue appearing March 8, 1838, at Brunswick, under the temporary editorship of Professor William Smyth, of Bowdoin College. Because of his college duties, at the end of a year, in 1839, Professor Smyth relinquished his editorship at the annual meeting of the State Society. The Society, recognizing the pressing need of such an organ, referred the matter to a committee. This committee recommended the issue of the paper as a weekly and with a permanent editor. They selected as editor Mr. Austin Willey, a graduate of Bangor Seminary in the class of 1837, much the largest class the Seminary had thus far graduated, and comprising also Cyrus Hamlin, the great missionary to Turkey, Elkanah Walker, for twenty years a missionary under the American Board among the Indians in the Oregon country, and Samuel C. Fessenden, already mentioned as pastor at

¹⁷⁵ See *ante*, p. 80.

East Thomaston (Rockland) and active in the anti-slavery cause.

The Editor from Bangor Seminary. An anti-slavery society with forty-seven charter members had been organized in the Seminary and the Classical Institution, then connected with the Seminary, in the summer of 1837, at which time the Bangor Anti-slavery Society and a "Female" Society had been organized in the town.¹⁷⁶ The spirit pervading the Seminary at the time on the great issue of the day is characterized as "not having a shackle of mental or physical slavery"; and it is further stated that "Free discussion, in its broad and proper import, is not indeed *allowed* here, for no power on earth has a right to *disallow* it. It is universally encouraged." This is a tacit reference to a famous incident in the life of Lane Theological Seminary, at Cincinnati, three years previous, of which one result was the establishment of a theological department in Oberlin college.¹⁷⁷ At the time Bangor Seminary was under the presidency of Dr. Enoch Pond. The students' Anti-slavery Society adopted a Constitution of five Articles, with Preamble, stating that the society would "exert itself in the exercise of all *proper* and lawful means for immediate emancipation," but would "never, in any way, countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by physical force."¹⁷⁸ Of this Society Mr. Willey was made the first president, and Mr. Moses M. Smart, of the class of 1839, the first secretary.

Career of the Advocate. Mr. Willey began his labors as editor of the *Advocate of Freedom* in 1839. In 1841 the name of the paper was changed to the *Liberty Standard*, and in the absence of Mr. Willey as agent of the State Society, the paper was in the care of Rev. J. C. Lovejoy for a year, but on his resignation, Mr. Willey resumed its editorship, not, however,

¹⁷⁶ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 118, 138; *C.M.*, Aug. 10, p. 2; Sept. 14, p. 23, 1837.

¹⁷⁷ *C.M.*, Sept. 25, p. 27; Nov. 6, pp. 50 f.; Nov. 13, p. 55; Nov. 27, p. 64; Dec. 4, p. 66, 1834.

¹⁷⁸ *C.M.*, Aug. 10, p. 2, 1837.

giving up his field work for the State Society. During the Mexican War a monthly, called the *Flag of Freedom*,¹⁷⁹ filled with anti-slavery addresses, was issued from the office of the *Standard*. Thousands of pages of anti-slavery literature in the form of leaflets and tracts were also printed and distributed from the same office. After the organization of the Free Soil party in 1848, the name of the paper was again changed to that of the *Free Soil Republican*. Soon compelled by his wife's ill-health to leave the State, the paper was sold to the *Portland Inquirer*, a Free Soil publication, but Mr. Willey, returning to the State in 1850, found the *Inquirer* almost defunct, resumed the editorship of it, and continued the work till his health broke in 1855, and he was obliged to remove to Minnesota. Mr. Willey was an ardent admirer of Mr. Garrison, and in many respects he copied Mr. Garrison's editorial ways and manners. Naturally, therefore, the "moderate" editor of the *Christian Mirror* and the Garrisonian editor of the *Advocate of Freedom — Liberty Standard — Inquirer*¹⁸⁰ were continually fencing. The education and native abilities of the two editors were very different, and the editorials of the latter were no match in literary ability and keenness of attack with those of the former. What the latter lacked in literary finesse and temper he made up in bluntness and force of expression. It was Damascus blade pitted against two-handed broadsword.¹⁸¹

The continuation of Mr. Willey's series of papers from 1839 to 1855 was a remarkable testimony to his unflagging zeal in the cause, and was brought about only by the most heroic labor and self-sacrifice for more than fifteen years, almost costing him his life. It is a little remarkable that both Mr. Willey and Dr. Cummings were obliged to give over their editorial labors

¹⁷⁹ Or *Flag of Liberty*, Mr. Willey giving both names, see pp. 299, 313 of his *Anti-slavery History*.

¹⁸⁰ The place of publication changed as often as the name — Portland to Hallowell, and back to Portland.

¹⁸¹ Cf., e.g., *C.M.*, Apr. 11, p. 147; Apr. 18, p. 151; May 2, p. 159; May 9, p. 162, 1844.

through ill-health at almost the same time, but the outcome for the two men was quite different. Dr. Cummings, in 1856, seeking health through a sea voyage, and a visit to a daughter in Panama, died *en route* on the way home and was buried at sea.¹⁸² Mr. Willey, removing to Minnesota, recovered his health and then resumed his editorial labors in Northfield, Minnesota, in the interests of anti-slavery and temperance, the two causes always nearest his heart, and did not die till 1896, at the ripe age of ninety.¹⁸³

The Anti-slavery Bangor Gazette. The anti-slavery men of Bangor, organized as a branch of the Liberty Party in 1842, issued an anti-slavery weekly from April, 1842 onward, later a daily, known as the *Bangor Gazette*, under the editorial care of John E. Godfrey, an early and devoted promoter of anti-slavery views in Bangor. The paper had no small influence, and was a power for years as an exponent of Liberty Party principles. When the Liberty Party was merged in the Free Soil Party in 1848, the editor succeeding Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Asa Walker, changed the name of the paper to that of the *Platform*, which continued for some time. As in the case of the *Liberty Standard*, Mr. Godfrey published in a monthly journal called the *Expositor*, corresponding to the *Flag of Freedom*, the leading articles of the *Gazette*. These articles are characterized as "temperate, judicious, and free from bitterness, and produced a good effect," contrasting in these respects strongly with Mr. Garrison's *Liberator*, and to a less degree with Mr. Willey's papers.¹⁸⁴

Discussion through the Press. The first half of this fourth decade of the nineteenth century was chiefly marked in the anti-slavery movement by the establishment of organizations, though, of course, not unmarked by discussion. The last half of the decade, at least in Maine, was marked by far more, and

¹⁸² C.M., June 24, 1856, p. 184.

¹⁸³ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, *passim*; *Hist. Cat. of Bangor Seminary*, 1928, p. 35.

¹⁸⁴ Griffin, *Hist. of the Press of Me.*, pp. 139 ff.

more vigorous, discussion of "the agitating question" than the first half. Naturally the *Christian Mirror*, as the virtual organ of the Congregational churches of the State, furnished the medium for most of these discussions by Congregationalists. Whatever may have been the personal views or feelings of the editor of the *Mirror*, his columns were freely open to communications from men with whom he was in pronounced disagreement, — much, of course, to his credit.

A writer in the *Mirror* late in 1834,¹⁸⁵ signing himself "C.C.," contributes an article with the caption, "Slavery Should be Discussed at the North," in which he, "a speedy emancipationist," argues for the necessity of discussion on the part of both North and South in preparation for such emancipation. His desires were amply to be met, as the sequel will show; but he was an emancipationist, or abolitionist, while the "Moderates" were not so eager for discussion. Tacitly they would have preferred "to let sleeping dogs lie," shunting responsibility for the continuation or abolition of slavery to the shoulders of the southerners; but the Abolitionists were to see that such silence should not be.

Character of Professor William Smyth. Among the Abolitionists of Maine there was none more sure of his principles, more calm and cogent in his exposition and application of these principles, more courteous in his language, or in manner more considerate of an opposing disputant, than Professor William Smyth of the chair of mathematics at Bowdoin College.¹⁸⁶ He had helped organize the State Anti-slavery Society, and the Cumberland County Society. His home in Brunswick was a way-station on the "Underground Rail Road" between the coast at Portland and the Canadian border in the wilds of Maine. He was temporary editor of the *Advocate of Freedom* during the first year of its existence. He wielded a pen as fertile and forceful as that of the accomplished editor of the

¹⁸⁵ Dec. 14, p. 69.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 69 ff., 178, 208, 306.

Mirror, though productive of quite different matter.¹⁸⁷ Stirred by a letter from a minister from Maine, traveling in the South, addressed to his home church, in which the writer presented a somewhat roseate picture of the condition of the slaves,¹⁸⁸ Professor Smyth replied with great clearness and good sense in a communication entitled "The Enjoyments of Slavery," which, however, only served to get him into a controversy with not only a correspondent who signed himself "A Laboring Man," but also the editor of the *Mirror* himself. Professor Smyth refuted the statement often made that the Abolitionists ought to visit the South and see the situation for themselves before they wrote on slavery;¹⁸⁹ he also met the charge urged against the Abolitionists, chiefly because of the extravagant utterances of Garrison in the *Liberator*, that they were given to the use of vituperative language, by showing that such language, which he himself deplored, was in common use by both parties. To the question what had the anti-slavery men done but declaim, he replied that they by their constant agitation had at least roused the whole nation out of their previous profound apathy on the subject of slavery.

As a matter of fact, Professor Smyth had here touched on the chief result of the anti-slavery agitation for half a decade previous. As time only more fully revealed, the South had already practically taken its stand irrevocably that its "peculiar institution" must not be touched, come what might, even the dissolution of the Union;¹⁹⁰ while, on the other hand, the North, in great majority, had also taken its stand irrevocably

¹⁸⁷ One is led by the style, logic and urbanity of the series of ten letters from *Amicus Omnium*, published in *C.M.*, Vol. XXVI, for 1846-7, to ascribe them to Professor Smyth.

¹⁸⁸ *C.M.*, Mar. 12, 1835, p. 121.

¹⁸⁹ E.g., "A Laboring Man" in the *Mirror* for Mar. 26, 1835; and "An Abolitionist" in the *Mirror* for Sept. 10, 1835.

¹⁹⁰ Cf., e.g., "The Abolition Question" in the *Mirror* for Sept. 10, 1835, p. 20, by "Thornton," of Richmond, Va., copied from the *N. Y. Observer*; and "The Voice of the Clergy," of Richmond, Va., in the *Mirror*, for Sept. 17, 1835, p. 34.

that sooner or later, somehow, slavery must go; and some, with the South, said even if it brought the dissolution of the Union. What took place during the next two decades was chiefly political maneuvering for advantage one way or the other, at the same time with a steady stiffening of determination on both sides.

The Bailey Letters. The longest discussion during this half decade was started by a letter of inquiry sent by Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast First, embodying several specific questions respecting various aspects of the slavery problem, chiefly as to what was being done to culture the slaves morally and religiously, but also as to "the actual influence of the American Colonization Society," and as to "the influence exerted at the South by the Anti-slavery Societies of the North." The letter was addressed to Rev. Rufus W. Bailey, born at North Yarmouth, Maine, a brother minister who had worked with Mr. McKeen, and who had been obliged by ill-health to go south, and now for eight years had been a resident in South Carolina preaching as a Presbyterian minister.¹⁹¹

Mr. Bailey replied in an original series of six long letters, supplemented by a letter giving religious statistics additional to those already given, and by a final letter entitled, "The Issue," all published originally in the *Mirror*, as was the single reply which Mr. McKeen made to the series.¹⁹² Mr. McKeen's letter in reply was adequate in neither length nor thoroughness of treatment, though clear and cogent so far as it went. Mr. Bailey's letters, though treating most fully the religious situation, ultimately dealt with some of the more fundamental issues. The most notable and impressive fact about his series is the revelation they make of how thoroughly he had become

¹⁹¹ Mr. Bailey graduated from Dartmouth in 1813; studied law a year with Daniel Webster; was ordained in 1819, holding pastorates in Norwich, Vt., and Pittsfield, Mass., before going to the South.

¹⁹² See *C.M.*, for Aug. 27, pp. 9 f.; Sept. 3, pp. 13 f.; Sept. 10, p. 17; Sept. 17, p. 22; Oct. 29, pp. 45 f.; Dec. 10, p. 69, 1835; and Feb. 4, p. 101; Apr. 7, p. 138, 1836.

imbued with the southern spirit, and how fully he had adopted the southern viewpoints.¹⁹³

Professor Smyth's Replies. Mr. Bailey, however, found a foeman far more worthy of his steel in Professor Smyth of Bowdoin. Adopting as the title of his series of four letters, also published through the medium of the *Mirror*, the title of Mr. Bailey's last letter, "The Issue," Professor Smyth, with the basic thoroughness and remorseless logic worthy of a skilled mathematician of high moral character, refutes Mr. Bailey's position on the religious training of the slave chiefly by meeting his testimony with the testimony of southerners themselves, notably the publications of James G. Birney, of Kentucky, a layman and former slaveholder; with a then recent address of the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky to the churches of that State; with a powerful appeal made to the Presbyterian churches of East Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri by a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. David Nelson, urging them to emancipate their slaves at once as "guilt increases as light is made to shine"; and, to make the refutation more cogent, with a long official statement made to the Presbyterians of South Carolina by Mr. Bailey's own Synod. Professor Smith also shows how far short of basic thoroughness Mr. Bailey comes when he touches upon the other phases of the problem of slavery.¹⁹⁴

The Discussion Renewed. This discussion, however, was only preliminary to another and longer one, between the same two disputants, running through the issues of the *Mirror* for the latter part of 1836 and a good part of 1837. Mr. Bailey opened the discussion, which primarily turned about the chief point of his previous series, the religious culture of the slaves of the South, with a series of nine letters with the general title

¹⁹³ Mr. Bailey republished his original letters and his replies to Professor Smyth, after "a careful revision," as a book in 1837, by a New York publisher, under the title, "The Issue."

¹⁹⁴ See *C.M.*, for Apr. 21, p. 145; Apr. 28, p. 150; May 5, p. 156; May 12, p. 160; May 19, p. 164, 1836.

of "The Issue." Professor Smyth replied with a series of thirteen letters with the general title of "The Issue Joined." Mr. Bailey followed with a series of nine "Supplementary Letters," to which Professor Smyth rejoined with a series of eight "Supplementary Replies." The entire discussion was carried on with remarkable freedom from anything unworthy of members of the Christian ministry (Professor Smyth was an ordained minister) and thoroughly comporting with the position taken respecting vituperative language by Professor Smyth noted above. However, even at this distance of time, one perceives the tensivity of defensive feeling already aroused in the South by the attacks of the Abolitionists on the one hand, and, on the other, the depth of emotion in the Northerner that his antagonist refuses to face the actualities of slavery as they notoriously existed, and parries rather than meets the logic of the mathematician.

In his ninth and final supplementary letter, Mr. Bailey summarizes his case as follows:

" 1. What I have said is calculated to show that slavery, as it here exists, is neither so oppressive to the slave nor injurious to the master, as you represent.

" 2. That a process of melioration is going on, which, if emancipation be practicable at all, will end in emancipation, amicably, without violence or bloodshed.

" 3. That the efforts of the A. S. Society have the direct effect both to increase the evils of slavery now and to hinder the progress of emancipation.

" 4. That while the Abolition effort is thus subversive of its object, it embitters and alienates the feelings on both sides of the North and the South, and, if persevered in, must end in the dissolution of the Union. . . .

" It will take half a century to bring the public mind to where it was when you began to drive it back, and another quarter of a century to bring it, by any means, to the point of emancipation. . . .

"Be assured, sir, the South, in this matter, will not be interfered with by any nation; . . . last of all by the yankees, their brethren, of whom, *as such*, they are jealous. And if you will be regardless of fraternal and prudential considerations, you shall have a family broil, of all quarrels the most bitter, the most unrelenting, and the most inveterate." ¹⁹⁵

Mr. Bailey's Ultimate Position. How thoroughly southern in feeling Mr. Bailey had become is evinced by his own statement, "I am a yankee, so born, so bred, so abiding in my professions, predilections, and sectional pride of character, yet I reaffirm what I have deliberately said before — and I do it with much consideration, — 'If I were the owner of a slave, I have no sentiments of morality or religion which would require or permit me to emancipate him at once, and in disregard of all circumstances.' — *My* interpretation of the law of love would forbid it." ¹⁹⁶

The discerning mind of his northern correspondent could not fail to note so emphatic a statement as this and others, and so Professor Smyth, in his third supplementary reply, wrote as follows, "How fully you have identified yourself with the South on the question of slavery, your letters, particularly the supplementary ones, furnish to my mind mournful evidence." ¹⁹⁷

Professor Smyth's Ultimate Rejoinder. And in this same letter Professor Smyth wrote this remarkable statement, "We are just beginning to find out that we cannot be free ourselves while two millions and a half of our country-men are in chains. We have slept over this fact too long. By the blessing of God we are to some extent awake now. We shall see that the manacles are not forged for our children, and the yoke put upon their necks, in order that southern masters may live without labor, and eat the bread earned by the tears and blood of their slaves. We shall slumber no more, until the curse, by which

¹⁹⁵ *C.M.*, June 7, 1837, p. 176.

¹⁹⁶ *C.M.*, May 18, 1837, p. 164.

¹⁹⁷ *C.M.*, July 6, 1837, p. 192.

our own liberties are put in jeopardy, is removed from our land.”¹⁹⁸ By these words one is not only led to recall the words of the Great Emancipator, spoken in the course of his memorable debate with Douglas, in 1858, “I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free,” but is given a startling insight into their deepest significance, the threat of slavery to the liberty of Northerners.

Other Disputants: Wales Lewis. Several others took note of Mr. Bailey’s letters and published refutations of one or another of his views. Rev. Wales Lewis, of Brewer First, referred to the point that, before emancipation could safely be accomplished, the slaves must first be educated, and showed the inconsistency of this position with the notorious laws or customs of the southern States forbidding or limiting all education of the slave, even the reading of the Bible.¹⁹⁹ Incidentally, in this same communication, Mr. Lewis takes exception to the virtual endorsement of Mr. Bailey’s views by editor Cummings.

Elijah P. Lovejoy. The most interesting, perhaps, of these briefer refutations came from the pen of Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, being first published in his own paper, the *Alton Observer*, but copied entire in the *Mirror*.²⁰⁰ He wrote:

“The Rev. R. W. Bailey has renewed the Slavery discussion in the *Christian Mirror*. He intends to show, ‘1. The Slaves of South Carolina are less destitute of the Bible than 5,000,000 Catholics in Ireland, and therefore not left to perish. 2. They are better furnished with the gospel ministry than the entire population of the City of New York. 3. They have a larger proportion of church members than the white population of Maine.’” To which this son of Maine replies, “The statement of Mr. B., contained in his three propositions, is thoroughly, absolutely and astonishingly incorrect,” and he proceeds to

¹⁹⁸ *C.M.*, Aug. 10, 1837, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ *C.M.*, Jan. 7, 1836, p. 88.

²⁰⁰ *C.M.*, Jan. 5, 1837, p. 88.

prove his thesis. Mr. Lovejoy later published in the *Observer*, of February 9, 1837, an open letter to the editor of the *Mirror* taking exception to the latter's endorsement of many of Mr. Bailey's positions.²⁰¹ To this letter Mr. Cummings replies in an unusually long and thoroughly characteristic editorial letter which reveals most clearly that editor Lovejoy had pierced editor Cummings' armor at several points.²⁰²

"Las Casas." Not least interesting among these individual communications called out by the long discussion over "The Issue" is one written to the *Mirror*, but addressed to "Rev. Mr. Bailey, of S. Carolina," and signed, "Your good friend, Las Casas."²⁰³ The writer ironically admits the truth of all Mr. Bailey's statements, and advises "all hardworking farmers and mechanics and other poor people . . . for their own physical, intellectual and moral good, to take measures, without delay, securing to themselves the blessings of involuntary servitude." Amid all the tremendously earnest and serious expressions upon this confessedly most serious problem it is a relief to find a bit of Lincolnian humor. To be sure, the editor of the *Mirror* scarcely betrays in his accompanying note that he takes it as irony.²⁰⁴

The Alton Tragedy. Almost on the heels of this long-drawn controversy came an event which better than any letter or argumentation revealed the true spirit developing both North and South, and what the controversy was gradually moving towards, an event which startled the South, shocked the North, and aroused North and South alike — the murder of Elijah Parish Lovejoy.

Career of Lovejoy. No narrative of the relation of our Maine Congregationalism to slavery could possibly overlook

²⁰¹ Cf. a similar criticism of the positions of the editor of the *Mirror* by *Amicus Omnium*, ten years later, in *C.M.*, Aug. 19, 1847, p. 13.

²⁰² *C.M.*, Mar. 9, 1837, pp. 122 f.

²⁰³ The famous Spanish bishop who in the sixteenth century labored so persistently to abolish Indian and Negro slavery in the Spanish colonies.

²⁰⁴ *C.M.*, Jan. 19, 1837, p. 92.

this event, if for no other reason, because Lovejoy had been born and reared in the home of a Maine Congregational minister, and there, as is clear enough from the activity of his brothers also in the cause of anti-slavery, had imbibed those principles of independence and freedom which cost him his life, and made him a notable personality in our national history not only from the point of view of the freedom of men, but, of course, as its corollary, the freedom of the press. Those principles could not but have been compacted and rendered permanent by his course at Waterville (Colby) College, the college of Professor Calvin Newton, an institution belonging to the Baptists, a denomination, as already remarked, far more solidly abolitionist than the Congregational. That Mr. Lovejoy was a Presbyterian minister was a mere incident due to his environment in St. Louis, whither he went in 1827 to teach school, and whither he returned, after graduation at Princeton as a licensed preacher of this denomination, to become the editor of the *St. Louis Observer*, the Presbyterian organ for the Southwest. Beginning as "a gradual emancipationist," his environment in St. Louis was wholly hostile to him and his views, now rapidly, almost suddenly, becoming "immediately emancipationist"; and so in 1836 he moved his press twenty-five miles up the river to Alton, Illinois, into a supposedly safe region. Not once but thrice his press was destroyed, and finally on the receipt of a fourth press from the Ohio Anti-slavery Society, he himself was shot to death defending his property, Tuesday, November 7, 1837. His brother, Owen, having partially completed his course at Bowdoin, had gone to Alton in 1833 to study for the ministry under his brother, and with him became irrevocably devoted to the abolition cause. On the fatal night in Alton, he knelt by his brother's dead body and vowed "never to forsake the cause that had been sprinkled with his brother's blood." As a Congregational minister at Princeton, Illinois, for seventeen years, until 1854, he fulfilled the vow he had made, and "more than any other man advanced abolition senti-

ment in the State." He left the ministry in 1854 only to transfer his anti-slavery efforts to the political platform and the halls of the Illinois State legislature and of Congress. Of him Lincoln wrote, "To the day of his death, it would scarcely wrong any other to say, he was my most generous friend." Owen had been a member of the class of 1836 in Bangor Theological Seminary, but, as at Bowdoin, did not finish his course there. His older brother, Joseph C., graduated there in 1834, and, as has been noted, became immediately active in the anti-slavery cause in the State. So far as the present writer's knowledge goes, no other Congregational minister's home in the State had done so much for the anti-slavery cause as that of Rev. Daniel Lovejoy, pastor in the little rural parishes of Albion, Windsor, Washington and Unity, with his wife, Elizabeth (Pattee) Lovejoy, both being of old New England stock. The father had died in 1833, but the mother was still living at the time of the tragedy, having her home with the next younger brother, Joseph C., who at the time was pastor of the Congregational church in Old Town, Maine. Born and bred in a Maine parsonage, having not only intimate acquaintances but nearest relatives still in Maine, Lovejoy's murder, which stirred the whole country, naturally had perhaps its profoundest reaction in Maine. At the request of the relatives a memorial sermon was preached in Old Town, December 31, 1837, by Rev. Silas McKeen, of Belfast First. A commemorative sermon had been preached on December 3, in Waterville, the seat of his *Alma Mater*. Meetings were held in various parts of the State, by churches and by local and county Anti-slavery Societies, to express the feelings widely held in resolutions of varying scope and intensity of feeling.²⁰⁵ It is noteworthy that "Philanthropos," William Ladd, of Minot, and President of the Na-

²⁰⁵ At Belfast, see *C.M.*, Dec. 7, 1837, p. 70; at Prospect (Searsport) *ibid.*, Dec. 14, 1837, p. 73; at Machias, *ibid.*, Dec. 21, 1837, p. 78; at Bangor Theological Seminary, and Litchfield, *ibid.*, Dec. 28, 1837, p. 84; at Portland, at a meeting of the Portland Anti-slavery Society, *ibid.*, Jan. 11, p. 89; at Charleston, p. 112, 1838.

tional Peace Society, because Lovejoy and his companions had defended themselves with arms, said, in an article published in the *Mirror*,²⁰⁶ "My conscience will not permit me to say that I think he died like a Christian."²⁰⁷ The editor of the *Mirror*, aside from calling upon Alton and Illinois to mete out due justice to the assassins, was himself strangely silent regarding the momentous significance of the event, taking refuge apparently behind a stirring communication from Rev. Thomas T. Stone, pastor in East Machias.²⁰⁸ This may in part have been due to the then constituency of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Missionary Society, having the general direction of the paper, a majority of them, including the editor, coming from Lincoln and Cumberland Conferences.²⁰⁹ In any wise, it reveals the state of mind in which many estimable leaders of the church were in those troublous and perplexing times.²¹⁰

Result of the Tragedy in Maine. An outstanding result of the event was to produce a great change of sentiment over the State, leading to the formation of numerous anti-slavery societies, local and county, e.g., at Charleston, Penobscot county, in Washington, Somerset, Franklin, and York counties, and even in Lincoln county.²¹¹ It lies outside the scope of this work to deal at any length with these local and county organizations as interdenominational, or non-denominational, but Congregational ministers and laymen were foremost in the organizations in the town of Litchfield, and in Washington, Lincoln, Somerset

²⁰⁶ For Jan. 25, 1838, p. 99.

²⁰⁷ Cf. a series of letters from Rev. Joseph Lane, of Westbrook First, entitled "Mobs-Free Discussion," beginning in the *Mirror*, for Dec. 21, 1837. Of like tenor as Mr. Ladd's judgment was that of Garrison in the *Liberator*.

²⁰⁸ *C.M.*, Nov. 30, pp. 66 f.; Dec. 7, p. 70; Dec. 28, p. 82, 1837. For Mr. Stone's sentiments on slavery see further *C.M.*, May 2, 1839, p. 156.

²⁰⁹ *C.M.*, for Jan. 18, 1838, p. 94, and *Me. Miss. So.*, Report, 1837, p. 19; cf. *Mirror*, Dec. 28, 1837, p. 82, editorial on the communication from Bangor Seminary.

²¹⁰ Two terms used were "non-resistant" and "non-resistance," corresponding to the present day terms, "Pacifist" and "Pacifism," see *C.M.*, June 20, 1839, p. 182.

²¹¹ *C.M.*, Feb. 15, p. 112; Mar. 8, p. 124, Mar. 22, pp. 131 f.; May 31, p. 172; June 14, p. 179, 1838.

and Franklin counties. No Congregational minister, however, signed the call for the York county meeting.

Action of the State Society. The annual meeting of the State Anti-slavery Society, succeeding the death of Mr. Lovejoy, was held in Augusta, January 31 to February 2, 1838. They passed a brief resolution to the following effect, "That the recent murder of our beloved and lamented brother Lovejoy, of Alton, is indicative of the spirit of slavery, and is what we all may be called upon to encounter in prosecuting our cause."²¹² The reporter of the meeting, Professor Smyth of Bowdoin, notes with satisfaction "that several of our most influential Clergymen and other citizens, were for the first time enrolled as members of the Society at this meeting." Professor Smyth and Rev. David Thurston were, as always, leaders in the proceedings.²¹³

²¹² See also *C.M.*, Mar. 14, 1839, p. 125, for action of the Society regarding his biography.

²¹³ *C.M.*, Feb. 15, 1838, p. 111.

DIVISION III

THE FORTIES: ACTION, ECCLESIASTICAL AND POLITICAL

Summary for the Thirties. Organization and discussion were the two outstanding characteristics of the anti-slavery movement in the North during the thirties. The former was chiefly independent of the churches, partly because of the at least lukewarmness of the churches as a whole on the subject of slavery, partly because slavery was so inextricably knit up with politics, and the separation between politics and religion was more strictly observed then than today. As for the churches, they did not need to be organized; their organizations, local, State or national, needed only to be informed, persuaded, convinced; and their forces thus brought to bear upon the great issue. Discussion, therefore, as has already appeared, was the great characteristic of the movement during the thirties, so far as the churches were concerned. As Professor Smyth of Bowdoin had so keenly noted, a great result had been obtained by the discussion — the country, previously unaware or apathetic, was now thoroughly awake and alive to the situation.

As regards the Congregational churches in Maine as a whole, as made clear in the resolutions adopted by the local Conferences, their estimate of slavery may be succinctly summarized as follows: Slavery was a sin, primarily and basically because the divine prerogative of direct and absolute authority over every human being was usurped in the case of the slave by the master. Slavery was a crime, beginning in the heinous crime of man-stealing, in which the present owner and master of slaves was a partaker; continuing in the deprivation by the master of the slave's liberty, real happiness and possibly of life itself — the slave was a "chattel personal," i.e., sheer prop-

erty. Slavery was a social evil, denying real marriage, corrupting the family life of both slave and master, and so undermining the moral life of the entire community. The slave system was demonstrably uneconomical and wasteful to the country as a whole. Politically slavery had always (and the more the longer it was tolerated) corrupted the national life. It threatened the dissolution of the Union, or the subjection of the entire people to its corrupting influences.

It was far easier for the churches to arrive at an estimate of slavery than it was to determine the best course of action respecting it. Here the churches and able minds in the churches differed. Those differences were roughly summarized in the terms "gradual emancipation," which included all sorts of opportunism or "watchful waiting"; and "immediate, universal and unconditional emancipation," or, in a word, abolitionism. Nine of the eleven local Conferences, by the end of the thirties, as we have seen, had reached the latter position. With them, as with all the churches, arose, however, the question what to do to translate resolutions into actions. They could, and they did, publish their resolutions. Casually, and also by deliberate action, the published resolutions were brought to the attention of slaveholders, only to enrage them and tighten the hold on the slaves, as Mr. Bailey pointed out. In the case of the churches another form of action lay close at hand in the general principles of Christ as to dealing with offenses in the church, a form of action prepared for, and made more appropriate, by the long-time custom of correspondence between the Maine churches as a body and other denominations — this was Christian conference, and possibly remonstrance on the part of the Maine churches, addressed to the churches already corresponded with, primarily the Presbyterian. This was the most natural form of action for churches. It was action by moral suasion as between Christian brethren of different denominations. This, as has been seen, was the form of action taken even by the "Moderates" on the committee representing the

State Conference, the result, however, being rebuff and alienation. Meantime another method of action, perfectly proper for a Christian church, had been taken, notably by Franklin and Somerset Conferences, evidently, too, in the mind of Kennebec Conference. Franklin Conference, at its meeting in June, 1839, practically denied the right to the name Christian of a church or minister who deliberately and wilfully refused or opposed the immediate abandonment of slaveholding. The logical inference of this stand would be the disfellowshipping of such church or minister, easy enough with respect to the churches and ministers of the South, but possible of serious developments if strictly applied in the membership of the State Conference. Similarly, Somerset Conference, at its meeting in September, 1839, following in the line indicated in the resolutions of the Somerset Association of Ministers two years earlier, denied the name Christian to a church or church members who believed or maintained the doctrine of American Slavery, and barred the Lord's Supper to such churches or their ministers. The utterance of the Kennebec Conference at their meeting in September, 1838, looked in the same direction. The underlying logic of so extreme utterances was that slavery was a sin; that, therefore, it ought to be immediately abandoned; and, if not abandoned, such church, church member, or minister, was to be disfellowshipped. Here, exercised so far as Congregational churches could go, was the principle or principles upon which the three great countrywide denominations of Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians eventually split, the Methodists and Baptists in 1844, and the Presbyterians by degrees from 1821 to near the Civil War.¹

Further Action of the State Conference. The first attempt at moral suasion of southern slaveholding Presbyterian churches or Presbyteries on the part of the State Conference had dragged along well into the forties. As already noted, at

¹ Thompson, *Presbyterians*, Chap. XII; Buckley, *Methodists*, Chap. XVII; Newman, *Baptists*, pp. 443-467, all in the *Am. Ch. Hist. Series*.

the session of the Conference in 1843 a renewed proposal for such correspondence was discussed, but no action taken.²

Reply to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1844. So the matter stood for two years, except for a communication from the Conference to the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1844. In 1841 the latter body had addressed a communication to the State Conference,³ to which, for reasons not explained, no reply was made till 1844, when the Corresponding Secretary, Rev. J. W. Chickering, of the High Street church, Portland, made a reply which contains a paragraph or two referring to intemperance and slavery which are most illuminating as to the conditions then prevailing in the State. After speaking of the temperance reform then sweeping the State, he continues:

"While bad men and haters of the church are using the temperance cause, as they do that of Emancipation, and some others, as instruments for promoting their disorganizing and violent schemes, yet we feel that 'the way of the Lord' has been greatly 'prepared' by this remarkable and sweeping reformation.

"We suffer in feeling, as in reputation abroad, with all our countrymen, on account of the dishonorable pecuniary transactions of some of the States, and the disgrace and sin of slavery in others, a disgrace and sin resting upon our *nation*, as that of the former does not, or at least *ought* not. Still, in New England there is but one feeling among the churches, we might almost say among the people, as to those and other questions of public morality.

"But we are in fact powerless, except by prayer and the full expression of our views . . . and no slaveholder is ignorant that the entire voice of the northern churches is against the

² *M.G.C.*, 1843, p. 7.

³ The year previous the Congregational Union of Scotland had issued, under date of April 16, 1840, a "Remonstrance on American Slavery to our Fellow Christians in America," but the State Conference does not appear to have referred to it; see *C.M.*, Jan. 7, 1841, p. 92.

whole system and practice of slavery. Differences we have as to measures, but neither advocate nor apologist for slavery can be found — with possibly the most rare exceptions — in all our body, and the corresponding associations through New England.”⁴

The above statements were from a member of the Cumberland Conference and were marked by the general temper of that body — certainly too optimistic as to the state of feeling in the churches, and too pessimistic as to the powerlessness of the same. The abolition group in the State would have uttered themselves in at least a somewhat different tone, as will presently appear.

Dealings with the Presbyterian General Assembly, 1845. At the meeting of the State Conference held at Fryeburg, of which Carlton Hurd was pastor, in the heart of the Somerset Conference, in June, 1845, it was voted that a committee be appointed to inquire whether any action, and, if so, what action should be taken by the Conference in reference to the recent resolutions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in respect to slavery.⁵ The committee appointed consisted of Rev. Charles Freeman, of Limerick, in the York Conference; Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, in the Kennebec Conference; and Rev. Josiah W. Peet, of Gardiner, also in the Kennebec Conference. The committee was ordered to report the next day. This they did through Rev. David Thurston. The report gave rise to a discussion such that the matter was referred back to the committee enlarged by the addition of Rev. William T. Dwight, of the Third church, Portland, and Rev. Ray Palmer of the Third church, Bath, in Lincoln Conference.

⁴ *M.G.C.*, 1844, pp. 30 ff. See an editorial in *C.M.*, Oct. 3, 1844, p. 41, on Conference action in general.

⁵ Meanwhile there had been an interesting correspondence going on with the editor of the *Mirror* from Gilman Rider, of Brownville (see *C.M.*, Sept. 17, 1840, p. 28; May 30, 1844, p. 176; June 6, 1844, p. 180; Nov. 14, 1844, p. 64; May 22, 1845, p. 172), chiefly on *Slavery and the Church*, so calm and convincing as to draw from the editor long replies, see *C.M.*, Nov. 5, 1840, p. 55; Nov. 14, 1844, p. 62; May 22, 1845, p. 170.

As matters stood in the local Conferences on the subject of slavery at the time of the previous correspondence between the State Conference and the Tombechee Presbytery of Mississippi, this committee was probably constituted as impartially as could be between "Moderates" and Abolitionists.⁶

The resolutions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church referred to were the "Deliverance on Slavery" made by the Assembly of the Old School in 1845, in response to the question "whether the holding of slaves is, under all circumstances, a heinous sin, calling for the discipline of the church." This question is at once narrowed to mean, "Do the Scriptures teach that the holding of slaves, without regard to circumstances, is a sin, the renunciation of which should be made a condition of membership in the church of Christ?" To this question the answer given was, "No." "This Assembly can not . . . denounce the holding of slaves as necessarily a heinous and scandalous sin, calculated to bring upon the Church the curse of God, without charging the Apostles of Christ with conniving at such sin, introducing into the Church such sinners, and thus bringing upon them the curse of the Almighty." The Assembly admits that there is evil connected with slavery; refuses to countenance the idea that masters may regard their servants as *mere property*, and not as human beings, rational, accountable and immortal; and recognizes that various opinions prevail as to the best methods of removing the evils of slavery; and declares that neither Scriptures nor our constitution authorize the Assembly to prescribe any particular course to be pursued by the churches in the matter; finally, that "the existence of domestic slavery, under the circumstances in which it is found in the southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion."⁷ Rev. Stephen Thurston, of Prospect (Searsport), was delegate that year from the State Conference

⁶ The Moderator at the time was Rev. George E. Adams, of Brunswick.

⁷ Cf. *C.M.*, June 5, 1845, p. 177, and particularly see Thompson, *Presbyterians*, pp. 369-372.

to the General Assembly, and "boldly rebuked the action, but met with frowns."⁸

By the Presbyterians themselves these positions were acknowledged to be a marked departure from the last previous deliverance of the General Assembly, that of 1818, by which the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another was declared to be "a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God; . . . and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ." Hence, it was "the duty of all Christians to labor for its complete extinction."⁹ The vast difference between the two deliverances is patent, and reveals what a change had come over the Presbyterian Church since cotton had become king in not only State but Church. This, then, was the question which confronted the General Conference of Maine, whether to continue correspondence with a body with which they had had fellowship for nearly a score of years.

The committee of the Conference reported, and the Conference accepted and adopted, the following statement:

"The General Conference of Maine have seen, with surprise and grief, the report and resolutions on the subject of Slavery, adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, at their recent session in Cincinnati. This document appears, in the view of the Conference, to be directly at variance with a former report, made by the General Assembly on the same subject, in 1818, and to be intended as a justification of the system of slavery now existing in the Southern States, by an appeal to the Scriptures, and contains nothing which looks, however remotely, to its overthrow; but is fitted to produce the impression that this system is justified by the Word of God, and therefore not to be abolished."

"This Conference deem it accordingly a duty, publicly to

⁸ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 277; *M.G.C.*, 1844, p. 6.

⁹ Thompson, *Presbyterians*, pp. 364-368.

express their dissent from these proceedings of a body with which they have so long maintained fraternal intercourse.”¹⁰

This action was of the mildest character, and there is no hint of interrupting the correspondence because of the position taken by the General Assembly. However, the General Conference was presently to have the matter of correspondence with slaveholding churches raised again.

With the Massachusetts General Association, 1846. Meantime, in 1846, the year following the correspondence with the General Assembly, the General Conference received a communication from the General Association of Massachusetts, officially transmitted by the Secretary of the Association, under date of March 17, 1846, setting forth the opinion of that body respecting slavery and earnestly beseeching “all Christians connected with the system, in view of their profession, to be living examples of the Gospel, and in the light of God’s truth carefully to review their opinions and their practice, and to do their utmost to free the church of Christ from the pollution of this guilt.” As in the case of the Maine Conference the year before, the action was limited to pious exhortation. Apparently the fellowship through correspondence with the evil-doers was not to be forsaken.

The General Conference of Maine acknowledged the receipt of the communication from Massachusetts, and replied by quoting in part their own position as expressed in resolutions passed in 1835 and 1836, and reaffirming their “abhorrence of the system, as being fraught with immense evil both to the oppressor and the oppressed.” They further reiterate the recommendations of the Massachusetts Association to slaveholding churches, and order a copy of this expression to be sent to the Massachusetts body, and to each of the ecclesiastical bodies with which they are in correspondence. That is, no step was taken to cease the correspondence.¹¹

¹⁰ *M.G.C.*, 1845, p. 12. For action of the Presbyterian Synod of Canada see *C.M.*, July 17, 1845, p. 202.

¹¹ *M.G.C.*, 1846, pp. 7 f.; cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 303.

The Memorials of 1847. In 1847, however, the State Conference was brought squarely up to the question of ceasing correspondence with "religious bodies, composed in part of slaveholders." This was through the presentation through the Committee of Arrangements of the Conference of certain memorials from members of churches in Union and Hallowell; in the case of the Union church, from six male and three female members, in the case of the Hallowell church, from eighteen male members, in neither case from the church as such. These memorials were referred to a select committee consisting of Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta South, Rev. William Warren, of Windham, Rev. Luther Wiswall, of Jackson and Brooks,¹² Rev. Timothy Davis, of Litchfield, and Rev. Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor First, or two from Kennebec Conference, and one each from Cumberland, Hancock and Waldo, and Penobscot Conferences. The committee reported at the session of the State Conference the following year at Bangor, four signing a majority report, one, Rev. Luther Wiswall, a minority report "on his own behalf," both reports being ordered printed, and as an appendix to the general report of the Conference were so printed under the title, "Terms of Correspondence."

The report of the majority opens with a reference to the position of the State Conference in 1838 and following years as stated in the correspondence with the Tombechee Presbytery, and in 1846, as stated in the reply to the communication from the General Association of Massachusetts. The report then states that "Your committee are all decided in the opinion" that it is not "incumbent on this Conference, as such, to take measures in relation to southern churches, of the nature of ecclesiastical discipline." God has not given such power to the Conference, and the constitution of the Conference expressly disclaims it. As to the questions raised, disciplinary power rests with individual churches or ministers. However, the committee are of the opinion that discontinuing of relations with

¹² On Mr. Wiswall see Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 93-95.

slaveholding bodies "would not be an unconstitutional exercise of ecclesiastical power" by the Conference. "If without any such assumption, we have commenced and continued the correspondence we might discontinue it," "nor would such discontinuing be *fully* equivalent to the declaration that we no longer regard the Presbyterian churches of the United States as churches of Christ. But it would approximate as nearly as circumstances admit to such a declaration." "Is this our duty," approvable by Christ? The Committee assert that it is not, and on three grounds: First, a large portion of the Presbyterian churches are free from all direct participation in slavery, and many of them are as opposed to it as are the churches of Maine. Second, "The General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church, though they have not taken the high stand, which, in our judgment, they ought to have taken, are not to be regarded as avowed advocates and supporters of slavery." The judgment by the Conference in 1845 that the declarations of the General Assembly of that year "were directly at variance with the views expressed in 1818," is not the construction put on the utterance of 1845 by the General Assembly itself in 1846. Third, "The Anti-slavery sentiment and spirit are manifestly extending, even in the Southern States, and we do not consider it either right, or expedient, for this Conference" to "weaken the hands of those brethren at the South, in the Presbyterian churches, who may be disposed by prudent measures in a Christian spirit to seek the termination of American slavery, and cut themselves off from all opportunity of remonstrating with them in future." The committee, therefore, recommend that delegates to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church be sent as before, and that correspondence respecting slavery be renewed by the Conference with southern churches.¹³

Mr. Wiswall's minority report, omitting the proofs substantiating the facts cited in the first part of his report and presented in an appendix to this document, was of equal length with the

¹³ *M.G.C.*, 1848, pp. 22-26; cf. *C.M.*, Aug. 10, 1848, p. 10.

report of the majority. The first part of his report is a statement of facts demonstrating that "slave-holding, as practiced, justified, or tolerated in the southern churches" is "such great error in doctrine or practice, as brings a public scandal upon religion, or as is manifestly and palpably at variance with the law of God and common justice." In a footnote he calls attention to the weakest point in the argumentation of the majority report where the contradiction between the declarations of the General Assembly of 1818 and 1845, a contradiction asserted by the General Conference of 1845, is now allowed to be interpreted by the southern body of slaveholding churches themselves as not contradictory, though persisting in their holding of slaves. The last part of Mr. Wiswall's report is taken up with answering objections to a course of discipline by ceasing correspondence with the offending churches.

Mr. Wiswall's conclusion, therefore, was as follows, "Under these circumstances, the committee recommend that the Conference do kindly inform those bodies, that we dare not take the responsibility of giving that countenance to the practice of slaveholding which is implied in this expression of fellowship, so long as they maintain their present relation to the system and practice of slavery; and give them such reasons and explanations as may be deemed necessary." And he adds, "Our duty to ourselves . . . as well as our duty to the oppressor and the oppressed, demands that we relieve ourselves of the responsibility of giving a *seeming*, and, in the general estimation of the community, a *real* countenance and support to the practice of slavery, as it exists in these churches."¹⁴

Judged not only in the light of subsequent events and of the then notorious facts regarding southern slavery, but also by the cogency of his argument, Mr. Wiswall's presentation was superior to that of the majority report. The latter (one might

¹⁴ *M.G.C.*, 1848, pp. 26-30; cf. *C.M.*, Aug. 10, 1848, p. 10. See also *ibid.*, p. 9, a communication from "W.W.," i.e., Rev. William Warren, of Windham, and *ibid.*, Aug. 24, 1848, p. 18; May 17, 1849, p. 169, also by "W.W."

say, of course) was adopted by the Conference, the adoption being a credit to the patience and forbearance of the Conference rather than to its judgment and logic. Indeed, it had good example as well as reason to cease correspondence, since both the Methodist and Baptist bodies had already divided over the issue of slaveholding, and even some Presbyterians had withdrawn from the General Assemblies and had organized the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church.¹⁵ Anyway, again after several years, the State Conference had taken action of a kind, but again it had gotten nowhere.

Dealings with the Synod of West Tennessee, 1848-1849. With their report the majority offered a resolution to the effect "That a committee of five be appointed to prepare and forward to the Synod of West Tennessee, at its annual meeting, a kind and respectful review of the Report, on the subject of slavery, unanimously adopted by the said Synod, in October, 1847 . . . and that the same document be sent by the Committee to the other ecclesiastical bodies at the South, connected with the two branches (Old School and New School) of the Presbyterian Church." The following were appointed on the committee, Rev. William T. Dwight, of Portland Third, Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, Rev. Nathan Dole, of Brewer First, Rev. Luther Wiswall, of Jackson and Brooks, and Rev. Ray Palmer, of Bath Third.¹⁶

The report of the Synod of West Tennessee, referred to in the resolution, was printed in full in the *Christian Mirror* and in part in the references made in the Committee's "Reply" or "Review," also published in the *Mirror*.¹⁷ Its tenor may be appreciated from two brief characterizations of the report by the authors of the "Review," as follows, "These statements [of the Report] contain no admission that the system of South-

¹⁵ *Ante*, p. 119; and Thompson, *Presbyterians*, p. 137.

¹⁶ *M.G.C.*, 1848, pp. 8, 22-30; *C.M.*, July 6, 1848, p. 198; for editorial comment see *ibid.*, July 13, 1848, p. 202.

¹⁷ Dec. 2, 1847, p. 73; and May 10, 1849, pp. 165 f.; and an anonymous comment on the report, p. 173.

ern slavery is essentially unrighteous and wicked, but that they are a virtual apology for its indefinite continuance." "Such a Report is, in our view, but a palliation of the inherent unrighteousness of the system of Southern slavery."

The Review by the Committee, occupying nearly eight columns of the *Mirror*, is a masterly arraignment of the whole system of Southern slavery, starting from the major premise that "all slavery, as a system, is wrongful and wicked," which the Committee recognize as the direct antithesis of the premise from which the Southern Synod starts.

In reviewing the whole material, "Report" and "Review," one cannot understand why the Committee and the Conference did not take the next logical step, break correspondence with a body (which they consider typical of all southern churches) which took the position assumed in the "Report," and put themselves alongside the northern Methodist, northern Baptist, and a portion of the Presbyterian, churches. On the contrary, the Report of the Committee, made at the meeting of State Conference at Bath, in June, 1849, was "accepted [evidently meaning adopted] and the Committee discharged with thanks for their fidelity and ability."¹⁸

The Memorials of 1849. It was not strange, therefore, that to this same meeting of the Conference there should have been presented "Memorials pertaining to slavery and correspondence with slave-holding Bodies." Only one such memorial is preserved in the printed minutes, and this is signed by four "members of Congregational Churches connected with the General Conference of Maine," viz., Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, Rev Luther Wiswall, of Jackson and Brooks, these two having been members of the Conference's committee on the Report of the Synod of Western Tennessee the previous year; Rev. John Perham, of Madison, and Rev. Josiah T. Hawes, of New Sharon. These four men represented unofficially Kennebec, Hancock and Waldo, Somerset and Franklin Conferences,

¹⁸ *M.G.C.*, 1849, p. 4.

respectively. The Memorial makes no reference to the Report of the Committee just received by the Conference, but, referring to the "Report adopted by the Conference last year," i.e., in 1848, says, "While it is sufficiently explicit in its condemnation of the sin of slaveholding, it fails to express any definite opinion on two questions which we deem very important to a right understanding of the position of the Conference." "We deem the question whether a gross violation of human rights and of the law of God is a bar to church communion and ought to be a subject of discipline, as important to the honor and purity of Christ's church as the question whether slaveholding is such a violation." The second question, in view of the lack of explicit statement of the Report of 1848, was, "Whether it is, or is not, their [i.e., the Conference's] opinion that this expression of fellowship should cease in case those churches disregard our admonition and continue their present relations to slavery?"

The memorials were referred to a committee consisting of Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, Rev. J. W. Chickering, of Portland High Street, Rev. Charles Freeman, of Limerick, Rev. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta South, and Rev. Richard Woodhull, of Thomaston, being two from Kennebec Conference, and one each from Cumberland, York and Lincoln Conferences.¹⁹

The Report of 1850. The Committee's Report at the meeting of 1850, at South Berwick, is not signed, but bears internal evidence of not being unanimous. It asserts that the views of the Conference on the general subject of Slavery are sufficiently set forth in the Report of 1848, and could not be made plainer. The questions raised by the memorialists are implied to be "of secondary importance." They are, therefore, answered rather by implication than explicitly, but plainly enough to the effect that correspondence is proper under the circumstances, and that the future must determine its own issues.

The memorialists ended their second query, as to the future

¹⁹ *M.G.C.*, 1849, p. 7.

action of the Conference, with the words, "So that those interested may know what to expect, and whether by continuing connected with the Conference they shall be held in their present relation of fellowship with slaveholders." This the Report interpreted to mean that the memorialists would sever their connection with the Conference unless the Conference would cease correspondence with churches continuing to fellowship slaveholders. The Report, therefore, looking upon the Memorial as a threat of ecclesiastical disunion right on the home ground, degenerates into a somewhat indignant homily to the memorialists on proper ideas of Christian fellowship.²⁰ The report was accepted.

This was in 1850. The compromise proposals of Henry Clay in Congress in 1850; the Supreme Court's further interpretation of the Fugitive Slave Law, in the same year; and the Kansas-Nebraska bill of 1854, were destined to give the "Moderates," or "middle-of-the-road," men fresh food for thought, and cause members of all local factions to hold their breath in view of what slavery as a political power might do.

Action of Local Conferences, 1840-1843. During the thirties the action of the local Conferences on slavery was more positive and probably more important than that of the State Conference. In the forties, on the other hand, the reverse is true. During the previous period the utterances of the local Conferences on the whole had gradually become more emphatic, till, as already noted, in the case of the Kennebec Conference in 1838, and of Franklin and Somerset Conferences in 1839, there was the renunciation of fellowship with slaveholding churches and ministers, a step which was urged on the State Conference, but which, through the preponderance not only in number but in influence, of the coastal, commercial Conferences, was refused, and State action limited to protest only.

During the years 1840 to 1843, the only Conferences to utter themselves were Franklin, Oxford, Union, Washington and

²⁰ *M.G.C.*, 1850, pp. 8, 22 f.

York, together with Lincoln, whose belated utterance in 1842 has already been noted. From the five others named the only utterance of importance came from Union Conference at their annual meeting at Bridgton, in June, 1843. After a long and very emphatic preamble, there follow five resolutions, the most important being the third and fourth, as follows:

" 3. That we cannot recognize as Christians in good standing, or admit to our communion and fellowship, those professed ministers and church members, who persist in the sin of holding their fellowmen and Christians as slaves, or maintain that slavery is an institution of God, and has the sanction of the Bible.

" 4. That we consider those ministers and Christians in the free States as guilty of a violation of the great law of love and duty, who neglect or refuse to bear their open, unequivocal and decided testimony against the sin of slavery."

By these resolutions Union had taken its position alongside Kennebec, Franklin and Somerset Conferences in the matter of fellowship, and had spoken most plainly its mind to many ministers and churches in the North, and of course also to many Maine Congregationalists.

Action of Local Conferences, 1844-1846. With the middle years of this decade, from 1844 to 1846, each of the twelve existing Conferences, except Kennebec and Cumberland, gave renewed attention to the subject. As already noted, resolutions were introduced into the Cumberland Conference, but died in committee.²¹ Kennebec could not do more than reiterate its previous views; it had gone to the extreme. The reasons for this renewed activity, except in one or two instances, are not clear, unless it was the feeling in the country over the annexation of Texas in 1845, and the preparations for the Mexican War which broke out the following year, and of these there is little or no mention. Franklin Conference, at its session in Strong, in June, 1844, after reiterating, with increased emphasis, its condemnation of slavery, said, "Resolved, That in our view

²¹ See *ante*, p. 78.

the time has come when the General Conference of Maine ought to manifest its disapprobation of slaveholding by refusing to be represented in those bodies where this sin is tolerated, and by refusing to receive delegates from them.”²² The following year, at their meeting in Chesterville, they expressed it as the mind of the Conference that “Our State Conference instruct her delegates to foreign bodies who countenance and encourage the *sin* of Slavery, by holding in their bosoms *Slaveholders*, to remonstrate with them against it.”²³ At their June meeting, in 1846, they asserted that Christian masters of slaves, not repentant, should be disciplined and excommunicated.²⁴ Hancock and Waldo spent a whole half day at their meeting at Jackson, in October, 1844, in the free and friendly discussion of the moral evils of slavery. Dr. Stephen Thurston, of Prospect (Searsport), and Rev. William J. Breed, of Bucksport, both having been in the South, put in a plea for the slaveholder as well as the slave.²⁵ Lincoln, at their meeting in Newcastle, in August, 1844, passed a mild resolution on the anti-biblical character of slavery, not going beyond their resolution of 1842.²⁶ Oxford, at its session in Sumner, in June, 1844, passed a series of three resolutions, the last of which, after the two preceding had strongly condemned slavery and as strongly admonished all Christians of their duty respecting it, proceeded to say, “Resolved, Nevertheless, that we have no fellowship and no sympathy with the spirit of come-outerism, censoriousness, or disorganization, which sows discord among brethren, seeks the division of churches, utters the language of anathema and excommunication, and refuses to cooperate with others in plans of general benevolence and acknowledged importance to the interests of morality and religion, merely on account of a difference of opinion in regard either to the nature of slavery, the

²² *C.M.*, July 11, 1844, p. 197.

²³ *C.M.*, July 17, 1845, p. 201.

²⁴ *C.M.*, July 9, 1846, p. 197.

²⁵ *C.M.*, Oct. 31, 1844, p. 54.

²⁶ *C.M.*, Sept 5, 1844, p. 23; see *ante*, p. 81.

magnitude of its evils, or the proper measures to be employed for its extirpation from our land, and also, that, in view of the increasing prevalence of this spirit, which we consider *unlovely*, *impolitic* and *unchristian*, we believe ourselves called upon to express our decided disapprobation of it, and even to discountenance all its manifestations, both in our language and conduct, with perfect frankness, kind feeling, and unyielding resolution and perseverance.”²⁷

Not phrased as aptly as an utterance of the feelings of the editor of the *Mirror* would have been, the content of the resolutions must have been most acceptable to him. The term “come-outerism”²⁸ was one familiar at the time to denote the withdrawal of one from any organization, with the principles of which one did not agree, as a final evidence of disapproval.²⁹ It had originated in an attempt to describe the extreme views and counsels of Garrison, but harked back, of course, to the Pauline admonition, “Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate.”³⁰

But back of the resolutions, with their emphatic dissent, lay matters far more vital and important for the churches. For long in this decade there was unrest, especially among the more pronounced Abolitionists in the Congregational churches over the policy of the American Board in respect to some of its missions and missionaries as regards slavery. In 1843 the matter had come to concrete action respecting a member of the Gaboon mission in West Africa, who, with his wife, had inherited a number of slaves, but had emancipated them.³¹

Objection was also taken to the policy of the Board in regard to some of its missions among the Indians, especially in the case

²⁷ *C.M.*, June 13, 1844, p. 182.

²⁸ Or “come-outism,” see report of Union Conference, *C.M.*, July 1, 1847, p. 193.

²⁹ See an article in *C.M.*, for May 8, 1845, p. 161, from “J.L.P.,” of Gorham; also, by the same writer, the *Mirror* for May 22, 1845, p. 169.

³⁰ II. Cor. 6:17; cf. Is. 52:11.

³¹ See the correspondence in *C.M.*, Sept. 29, 1842, p. 34; June 29, 1843, p. 189; July 13, 1843, p. 198.

of the Cherokees and Choctaws, that members of the Indian churches were allowed to keep slaves. Memorials respecting this matter were presented to the Board at its annual meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts, in September, 1844, one of which, and the only one published, had at the head of the list of memorialists Rev. Joseph C. Lovejoy, at the time resident in Massachusetts. These memorials were referred to a committee of ten, prominent among them being Dr. Bennett Tyler, formerly of Portland Second, Rev. Swan L. Pomroy, of Bangor First, and Dr. Benjamin Tappan, of Augusta South. This committee reported briefly to the meeting before its adjournment, referring to previous utterances of the Board respecting slavery, and declaring that "They can sustain no relation to slavery which implies approbation to the system, and as a Board can have no connection or sympathy with it." The memorial respecting the situation among the Indian missions bringing up a new point, the committee requested time to investigate it. At the annual meeting of the Board held in Brooklyn, New York, in 1845, the committee made a very long report which brought on a discussion lasting for an entire day. The report of the committee was eventually adopted as first presented.³² This, however, did not still the agitation, for memorials respecting slavery, together with the matter of polygamy, were presented at the meeting of the Board held at New Haven, Connecticut, in 1846. One of the memorials on slavery came from "a missionary convention held in Dexter, Maine," called by the Piscataquis Conference of churches.³³ These memorials were referred to a committee, which in its report practically took refuge behind the long report of 1845.

The insistent recurrence of memorials shows that there were

³² *Missionary Herald*, Oct., 1844 and Oct., 1845. Cf. also *C.M.*, Aug. 15, p. 10; Oct. 3, p. 37, 1844; Feb. 20, p. 118; Oct. 2, p. 40; Oct. 16, p. 46, 1845; Feb. 5, 1846, p. 109, an article in a series on Slavery by Dr. Pond, of Bangor Seminary. The memorials to the Board and the Report were published separately as a pamphlet in 1845 in Boston.

³³ *Missionary Herald*, Oct., 1846; cf. *C.M.*, Feb. 5, 1846, p. 110; Sept. 17, 1846, p. 30. See *post*, p. 137.

many not satisfied by the Board's defense, and, with some show of reason, the Board was charged with being evasive in its various reports.³⁴ In any case, the incidents revealed how sensitive the conscience of not a few in the North was becoming on the matter of slavery. The result was that some persons withdrew their financial support from the Board, at least temporarily, and gave it to an independent organization called the Union Missionary Society, a society organized in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1842, to care for the mission started in Africa after the famous Amistad incident. It was pronounced in its anti-slavery views, and was one of the organizations later forming the American Missionary Association.

The Oxford Conference was not the only one perturbed over the matter. The Hancock and Waldo Conference, at their fall session at Frankfort, in October, 1845, shortly after the meeting of the Board in Brooklyn, spent an entire evening discussing the elaborate report made at that meeting. The critics of the Board at Frankfort regretted "that the corporate members of a society, organized for the sole purpose of sending the pure gospel to the heathen and of planting pure churches among them, did not resolve and publish to the world that they could not sustain missionaries who would introduce into their churches, by introducing those who practised it, a system of iniquity." The defenders of the Board urged that "we have no right to refuse Christian ordinances to any one who gives credible evidence of piety; that the interest of slaves is in some cases promoted by their bondage; that the laws of the land are such as to make the securing of freedom possible at too great a sacrifice; that the Christian masters already existing are likely to leaven the whole lump; that for the Board to take any other position, the mission at present among the Indians would suffer; that whatever be the moral relations of the Board,

³⁴ The Board continued to be disturbed over the matter for years; see the *Missionary Herald* for 1847 and following years, especially for 1848, when another very long report on the matter was made at the annual meeting.

any other position would mean loss of sympathy for it ; and that it did not become the members of the Conference to call in question the wise men who adopted and defended the report.”³⁵

As was remarked in another connection, all these points of the defenders were very “like the opiates the slaveholding Christians of the South administered to their consciences.”

The Penobscot Conference, also, at its meeting at Orono in January, 1846, had the report of the Board at Brooklyn brought before it for discussion. A committee of three, consisting of Professor George Shepard, now of Bangor Seminary, Rev. John Maltby, of Hammond Street church, Bangor, and Mr. Asa Walker, was appointed to review the report, and make report to the Conference. No clue is given as to the nature of the committee's report.³⁶ The Piscataquis Conference at their meeting in Brownville, in January, 1846, similarly had the report of the Board, made the previous September, brought up for discussion by Rev. Wooster Parker of Foxcroft and Dover, he following his remarks by presenting five resolutions strongly condemning the Board's position. The resolutions were first referred to a committee which recommended that the matter was of such moment that it ought to be referred to a convention of the churches. This Convention met in March, 1846, at Dexter, and passed a series of twelve resolutions adverse to the policy and practice of the American Board, and addressed a “Memorial” to the Board on the subject.³⁷ At the next meeting of the Piscataquis Conference, held in June, 1846, at Abbot, Mr. Parker was the preacher of the opening sermon, his text being, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.”³⁸ Franklin Conference, at their session of June, 1850, appointed a committee to investigate the relation to slavery of both the American Board and the American Sun-

³⁵ *C.M.*, Nov. 6, 1845, p. 58.

³⁶ *C.M.*, Feb. 5, 1846, p. 110.

³⁷ *C.M.*, Mar. 19, 1846, p. 135, and the editorial on this action on pp. 110 and 134. See *ante*, p. 135.

³⁸ *C.M.*, Feb. 5, p. 10 ; July 2, p. 193, 1846.

day School Union, to report in 1851, but apparently no report was made.³⁹

At the same summer session of the Oxford Conference at Sumner, in 1844, noted above, they had before them a resolution "to withdraw from all professing Christians, who hold slaves themselves, or justify others in so doing, that fellowship which implies that we regard them as consistent and worthy members of the church of Christ." The matter was referred to a committee which reported at the meeting a year later in South Paris. The committee, in a somewhat long report, took the position that the resolution assumed "that the Conference is, in the strict and technical sense of the phrase, an ecclesiastical body." They state that the Conference "possesses no such power, and ought to avoid so much as the appearance of assuming it; especially, of doing it to such an extent, as that of passing a sentence of virtual excommunication upon the Southern church, or any portion of it." The committee close by saying, "Nor are we at all apprehensive that by rejecting it [the resolution], they [the Conference], can, after an *express* declaration of their decided and unmixed disapprobation of American slavery, be justly considered as *favoring* it, or as in the least *justifying* those professors of religion who practise it."⁴⁰ It was voted to accept the report, the implication being that it was not unanimously done. Here, more concisely and vigorously expressed however, was the point raised by Rev. J. W. Ellingwood, of Bath, regarding the correspondence between the State Conference and the Tombecebe presbytery in the previous decade.⁴¹

Somerset Conference at its session at Bloomfield, in September, 1844, held a prolonged discussion over the questions whether they, in their ecclesiastical capacities and relations, had any duties to perform on the matter of slavery, and, if so, what. There appeared differences of opinion, so that no result

³⁹ *C.M.*, July 4, 1850, p. 197.

⁴⁰ *C.M.*, June 19, 1845, p. 185.

⁴¹ See *ante*, pp. 99 ff.

in resolutions was achieved.⁴² Union Conference, at their session at North Bridgton, in June, 1846, simply passed a resolution of sympathy for the widow and children of Rev. Charles T. Torrey, a minister who had recently died in prison in Maryland, being charged with assisting slaves to escape, "a martyr to the principles of humanity and religion"; protested against "that system of wicked and oppressive laws"; and pledged themselves "to use all gospel means in our power for the overthrow of that bloody system of wickedness."⁴³ The case of Mr. Torrey had caused a profound sensation throughout the North. Washington Conference, meeting at Machias in October, 1846, unanimously adopted very general resolutions expressing their abhorrence of the system of American slavery, and declaring that "they are bound to testify firmly against it and to seek its extinction by every fit means in their power."⁴⁴ Finally York Conference, at its meeting in Limerick, in June, 1845, listened to an elaborate report from a committee, of which the Limerick pastor, Rev. Charles Freeman, was chairman, on the interference of American slavery with the right of men to read the Bible for themselves. The report was necessarily of the nature of an essay, led to no resolutions, and drew no important conclusions. Characteristic of the Conference was the statement, "We have a right to judge for ourselves what measures we shall take against slavery as an obstacle to the free circulation of God's word."⁴⁵

The Years 1847 to 1850. The remaining years of the present decade, 1847 to 1850, were almost devoid of action by the local Conferences. At the session of the Hancock and Waldo Conference held in January, 1847, a memorial respecting correspondence between the State Conference and southern slaveholding bodies was received from the church in Jackson and Brooks, of which Rev. Luther Wiswall was pastor. The nature of the me-

⁴² *C.M.*, Oct. 3, 1844, p. 37.

⁴³ *C.M.*, Oct. 27, 1846, p. 54.

⁴⁴ *C.M.*, July 2, 1846, p. 193.

⁴⁵ *C.M.*, June 12, p. 182; June 26, p. 189, 1845.

morial is not stated, and can only be surmised from Mr. Wiswall's well known views. It was referred to a committee consisting of Rev. Stephen Thurston, of Searsport, Rev. Nathanael Chapman, of Camden, and a layman, Mr. Davidson. The committee reported orally at the meeting in June, 1847, and asked to be continued. Apparently the matter died in committee.⁴⁶ Franklin Conference, at its meeting in Farmington, in June, 1848, passed a resolution "To withhold from all professing Christians who hold slaves, or openly justify or defend the practice of slaveholding, all those forms or expressions of fellowship which imply that we regard them as *worthy* members of Christ's visible body."⁴⁷ The same Conference, at its meeting held at Wilton, in June, 1849, Rev. David Thurston being present, adopted a memorial to the State Conference on the subject of continuing fellowship with churches tolerating slavery, but the exact nature of the memorial is not reported. However, it can easily be surmised from the pretty uniform action of this Conference in previous years.⁴⁸

Action of Three New Conferences. This decade saw the organization of three new local Conferences, Piscataquis in 1842, being formed out of a number of churches formerly in Penobscot Conference; Aroostook Conference, in 1846, consisting originally of but three churches, two of which came also from the Penobscot Conference; and Waldo Conference in 1848, consisting of eight churches formerly members of the Hancock and Waldo Conference and lying west of the Penobscot river. Piscataquis Conference first expressed itself in a very mild resolution at its meeting in January, 1844; with much emphasis at their meeting of January, 1845; and again in June, 1845.⁴⁹ The action of Piscataquis Conference on the relation of the American Board to slavery has already been noted. So far as published reports of the proceedings of the other two Confer-

⁴⁶ *C.M.*, Jan. 21, p. 101; June 24, p. 189, 1847.

⁴⁷ *C.M.*, July 6, 1848, p. 197.

⁴⁸ *C.M.*, June 28, 1849, p. 194.

⁴⁹ *C.M.*, Feb. 1, 1844, p. 105; Feb. 20, p. 118, and June 26, p. 190, 1845.

ences go, neither took any action on the subject during the remaining years of the decade.

A general survey of the action of these local Conferences during the forties, as compared with the thirties, leaves the impression that either anti-slavery sentiment was weakening, or rather there was a feeling of helplessness in the face of the stubbornness and, in cases, angry hostility of even southern church members who were slaveholders or favorable to slavery, when approached by the northern churches in protest or Christian remonstrance.⁵⁰ Certain Conferences, it is true, especially Kennebec and Franklin, had not wavered, but these two stood practically alone among the now fourteen Conferences in their plain speaking and withdrawal of fellowship.

Action of Local Churches. Such was the situation in the local Conferences as the fifth decade of the century drew to a close. As in the previous decade, so in this, some of the local churches put themselves on record, apparently more of them than in the thirties. In April, 1840, the Congregational Union of Scotland, at their annual meeting held at Dundee, issued an "Address on American Slavery" as a "Remonstrance" to their fellow Christians in America. It was a remarkably able and cogent paper, characterized by logical argumentation and plain speaking. As evidence of the latter a single brief quotation may be made. In the midst of the course of argument the writers say, "Brethren! 'necessity is upon you,' and, harsh as the judgment may seem, we cannot see your escape from the obligation but by dishonoring or abjuring your most holy faith."⁵¹ This "Address" was read to the church in Winthrop, on Sunday, Feb. 18, 1841, upon which the church, led by its pastor, Rev. David Thurston, passed a set of seven resolutions. They refer to their earlier action of August, 1835; express their gratitude to the Scottish Union for its plain words, in spite of

⁵⁰ For a contemporary estimate of the situation, too optimistic by far as events proved, see "J.R." in *C.M.*, Aug. 23, 1849, p. 17.

⁵¹ See the entire "Address" in *C.M.*, Jan. 7, 1841, p. 92.

their humbling effect; acknowledge and deplore the prejudice against color prevalent in the country; and reiterate the position taken in 1835, "That they could not receive a slave-holding minister to their pulpit, nor a slave-holding professor to their communion."⁵² It must have been about this same time, or soon after, that the Winthrop church put out what was referred to as the "Winthrop Circular," in which the church again declared its "sentiments on the subject of slavery, and the duties of churches respecting it, and appended some resolutions, one of which declared that the *Christian Mirror* had forfeited the confidence of the churches."⁵³ Apparently the circular was sent not only to at least all Congregational ministers and churches, but to the *Mirror* for publication. So far as known, it naturally was not published by the *Mirror*, but gave occasion for some protests from ministers, and to some characteristic editorial remarks.⁵⁴ However, Winthrop was not alone in plain speaking, except for the condemnation of the *Mirror*. The church in Topsham, in the pastorate of Rev. Daniel Sewall, in October, 1842, passed a series of resolutions which go even one step beyond those of Winthrop. The second and part of the third and fourth of these resolutions read as follows, "Resolved that we have no more right to practise, defend, excuse or palliate the sin of Slavery, or remain silent in reference to it, than any other sin; and, consequently, we have no more right to fellowship the slaveholder or his abettor or apologist, than we have to fellowship the man who practises any other great wickedness, or the man who assists him in crime, or the man who apologizes for his crime.

"3. Resolved, That . . . we could not receive to our pulpit the slaveholder, nor fellowship him as a Christian, nor be edified by his preaching, nor one who should fellowship such a one, and apologize for his sin.

⁵² *C.M.*, Mar. 18, 1841, p. 129.

⁵³ Cf. the statement of "*Amicus Omnium*" in *C.M.*, Aug. 19, 1847, p. 13.

⁵⁴ *C.M.*, Dec. 9, p. 75; Dec. 16, p. 79, 1841; Jan. 27, 1842, p. 103.

"4. Resolved, That, as we could not receive a slaveholder into our communion and fellowship, so we could not dismiss and recommend one of our own members to a slave-holding church."⁵⁵

In this last was taken the final step in disfellowshipping slavery. Of similar tenor, and taking the same final step, were the resolutions passed "with great unanimity" by the church in Hallowell, in October, 1842, under Rev. Eli Thurston as pastor.⁵⁶ Scarcely less vigorous are the resolutions passed by the church of Winslow, in April, 1844, under Rev. John Perham as stated supply.⁵⁷ The statement of the church in Vassalboro', made in April, 1844, asserts that "in our humble opinion, if any character, either mahommedan, papist, infidel or pagan, is undeserving Christian fellowship it is the slaveholder, living under a free government"; but, at the same time, deprecates extreme and divisive opinions and judgments, with evident reference to extreme Garrisonism, and possible reference to the division of opinion over the policies of the American Board. These views of the Vassalboro' church are the more interesting because apparently the expression of the laity only, Vassalboro' being at the time pastorless.⁵⁸ Still more general and mild are resolutions passed by the church in Lebanon, in York Conference, in June, 1844, under Rev. Joseph Loring.⁵⁹ It will not have escaped the attention of the reader that the churches of Winthrop, Winslow, Hallowell and Vassalboro' were all in Kennebec Conference, and all therefore subject more or less to the masterful influence of one of Maine's Nestors in the anti-slavery movement, Rev. David Thurston. The last part of this decade does not seem to have produced any public, or, at least, published, expression on the part of individual churches. The same conditions as have been noted as prevailing in the

⁵⁵ *C.M.*, Nov. 17, 1842, p. 63.

⁵⁶ *C.M.*, Oct. 26, 1842, p. 50.

⁵⁷ *C.M.*, May 2, 1844, p. 157.

⁵⁸ *C.M.*, May 23, 1844, p. 171.

⁵⁹ *C.M.*, June 27, 1844, p. 189.

local Conferences would seem to have been prevalent in the churches.

The Political Aspects of Slavery Till 1848. From the beginning of the Federal government slavery was not only an industrial and social institution of long standing and, with the passing of the years, being more and more thoroughly and vitally inwrought into the general industrial and social structure, especially in the South, but as such was virtually protected by the compromises of the Federal Constitution: the provision for representation in the lower House of Congress; the equality of representation as between large States and small in the Senate; the provision for fugitive servants or laborers; the prohibition of legislation respecting the foreign slave-trade before 1808; and, fundamental to these, the principle of State rights. The Congressmen from the southern States well understood the constitutional advantages they were possessed of, and when, after cotton growing became so enormously profitable that the advantages of slavery to the financial and political power of the South far outweighed with them the manifest evils of the system, they pushed their advantages to the limit.

When the Federal government first went into operation in 1789, the year before the thirteenth State, Rhode Island, ratified the Constitution, the States north of Mason and Dixon's line and those south were equally divided. With the admission of Rhode Island began a see-saw between the North and the South in the admission of States, well illustrated in the case of the States of Maine and Missouri, which continued till 1845, when the admission in that year of Florida and Texas gave the South the manifest advantage of fifteen States as over against thirteen for the North, and so put the South in the preponderance in the Senate, and, with representatives from the North in the House of Representatives who voted pro-slavery, also in the lower House. But in 1846, with the admission of Iowa, there began a series of admissions of States from the North, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota and Oregon, following Iowa,

all free States, which reversed completely the situation in the Senate and tended also to bring about a reversal in the lower House. Hence the tremendous political struggle of the last part of the forties and all of the succeeding decade, until the political struggle became a bloody conflict at arms.

Influence of the Political Situation on the Anti-slavery Movement. It was with a partial understanding of the tremendous Constitutional and political advantages of the increasingly pro-slavery South that the northern anti-slavery movement of the thirties began; and it was the appreciation of the enormous disadvantage under which they worked that steeled the leaders of the movement to such persistence and sacrifice, and nerved them for endurance of any opposition either from a determined South or an apologetic and compliant North. From the outset of the movement the leaders were, in spite of general opinion to the contrary, churchmen and even ministers. That must have become perfectly clear in the case of the movement in Maine as already presented, and Maine was really typical of the movement throughout the North. Further, the strength of the moral opposition to slavery rested in the religious conviction that slavery was a sin. That becomes startlingly clear as one threads one's way along the somewhat unclear course of the development of opinion in the case of Maine.

The Moral Aspect of the Movement. In that development the churches and ministers had always kept in mind the fact that their first responsibility was a moral, not a political one; that that responsibility consisted in rousing in the public an interest in "the agitating question"; in informing the public mind, and in moulding public opinion by persistent discussion; and, in the case of the South and particularly the southern churchmen, in appealing to their Christian conscience, and in pressing upon them their Christian duty towards their slaves.

Gradual Recognition of the Political Aspect. Such, in fact, was the chief position of the American Anti-slavery Society, as becomes clear in reading the "Declaration" put forth

by the Convention which met in Philadelphia in December, 1833, and the Constitution which the Convention adopted. But the founders of the Society were not going to tie their hands. Very briefly, almost incidentally, in their "Declaration" they state, "We *also* maintain that there are, at the present time, the highest obligations resting upon the people of the free States to remove slavery by moral *and political* action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States."⁶⁰ In the Constitution adopted, in Article II, in which the objects of the Society are stated, after stating first the moral aims of the organization, they proceed to say, "The Society will *also* endeavor, in a constitutional way, to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic slave-trade, and to abolish slavery in all those portions of our common country which come under its control, especially in the District of Columbia, . . . and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State that may be hereafter admitted to the Union."⁶¹ As Garrison's opinions and views developed until he repudiated not only the church but even any political action, much more allegiance to any political party, and advocated the political equality of the sexes, his influence with many of the ablest anti-slavery men in the country waned, till new anti-slavery societies were formed. In Massachusetts, in May, 1839, the Massachusetts Abolition Society was formed, by the Constitution of which the same ends as above mentioned in the Constitution of the American Anti-slavery Society were to be sought "in a constitutional way." In May, 1840, the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society was formed by a secession from the American Anti-slavery Society, largely because of opposition to the Garrisonian positions. In late July and early August, 1839, a National Anti-slavery Convention, with over four hundred delegates from every State north of the Potomac and Ohio rivers, was held in Albany, New York, at which "all

⁶⁰ *The Abolitionist*, Dec., 1833, p. 179.

⁶¹ "Liberty," pp. 104 ff., in "Anti-slavery Miscellany," in the Library of the Bangor Theological Seminary.

their fellow citizens who value free political institutions for themselves or their children " were summoned " to neglect no opportunity, whether of petition, remonstrance, or rebuke at the ballot-box, to cast out from the political parties with which they may be associated, a spirit which tramples in the dust the purest principles of both conservative and radical republicanism "; and also resolved " That we will neither vote for, nor support the election of, any man for President or Vice-President of the United States, or for Governor or Lieutenant Governor, or for any legislative office, who is not in favor of the immediate Abolition of Slavery." This Convention was the forerunner of the Liberty Party, organized also at Albany, in April, 1840, to unite the politically minded anti-slavery men of all parties in a new party having as its chief purpose immediate abolition. The anti-slavery movement was now definitely launched into politics.

Position of the Maine Anti-slavery Society. The Maine Anti-slavery Society, as noted earlier, expressly disclaimed political action to attain its ends, in the words, " The leading object of the Society is to do what it can by moral and religious means, *and by no other*, to secure the entire and immediate emancipation of our enslaved brethren and sisters." ⁶² But at their annual meeting in Augusta, in February, 1839, on motion of Rev. Stephen Thurston, of Prospect (Searsport), the Constitution of the Society was amended so as to read, " by means such as law, philanthropy and Religion can sanction," eliminating the limiting phrase, " and no other," and opening the way for political activity. This, as will be observed, was prior not only to the Albany Convention and the formation of the Liberty Party, but even to the formation of the Massachusetts Abolition Society and the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society. That is, the leaders in the Maine Anti-slavery Society were awake to the growing exigencies of the political as well as moral situation. Some of them, indeed, had spoken much

⁶² *C.M.*, Feb. 14, 1839, p. 110; Mar. 14, 1839, p. 125.

earlier. In an early utterance of the then recently formed Cumberland County Auxiliary of the State Society, we find the following expression, already quoted, of their sense of political responsibility, "We would not forget or conceal the fact that as citizens and Christians we are no less responsible for the use we make of our political, than of our other rights and privileges. The great value of the civil privileges by which we are blessed consists in the fact that we may, and, when occasion requires it, are bound, in the fear of God, so to employ them as will best promote the happiness of our fellowmen, and the lasting security and honor of our country."⁶³ These were plain, but noble words, worthy of Christian men, and a clear warning to the politicians of the slaveholding South, or their subservient coadjutors in the North, that political responsibility and rights were not one-sided, but might be brought to bear against, as well as for slavery.

Most Immediate Political Action. Naturally, the political responsibility nearest at hand was to elect anti-slavery members of the State Legislature, and especially members of Congress who should take a stand as openly and stoutly against slavery as those from the South did for slavery. If the contest then went against them through the subserviency to slavery of either or both of the existing parties, time would justify the organization of a distinctly anti-slavery political party. Of course, the tracing of the development of the purely political phase of the anti-slavery movement, even as regards Maine, lies outside the scope of this narrative.

Petitions to Congress. One of the most direct means of keeping Congress aware of anti-slavery sentiment and purpose was through petitions to be presented on the floor of Congress, and thus lead at least to discussion, possibly to action, and the thirties were the years when the constitutional right of citizens to petition Congress on any matter was most hotly contested. The earliest point of attack here was the position of slavery in

⁶³ *C.M.*, Feb. 19, 1835, p. 110.

the District of Columbia.⁶⁴ Not only were large numbers of slaves held in the District, but almost in the shadow of the capitol were slave-pens and slave-marts for the increasing domestic slave-trade. No anti-slavery man really had need to go further into the Southland than the District to perceive the iniquity, and feel the shame, of the system — and this as a mere citizen of his country; and, of course, many such men visited their nation's capital. A concise and vigorous statement of the situation in the District in an editorial in the *Mirror*, accompanied by a form of "Memorial" to Congress on the subject, stands in pleasing contrast to the larger number of the editor's contributions to the anti-slavery cause.⁶⁵ An example of such memorials or petitions is that presented by a large number of citizens of Waterville and Vassalboro', in the State of Maine, by their representative on the floor of the national house, in 1835.⁶⁶ The attitude of local anti-slavery societies in the State may be illustrated by a resolution passed by the Anti-slavery Society of Charleston, organized as one result of Lovejoy's murder, which declares "That Congress has power by the Constitution of the United States to abolish slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia."⁶⁷ The Constitution read, "Congress shall have power . . . to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the Government of the United States."⁶⁸ This would seem to be definitively clear, and yet the southern members of Congress through Henry Clay claimed that it was restricted by conditions existing in the

⁶⁴ A form of "Memorial" to Congress, taken from Lundy's "Genius of Univ. Emanc.," is given in *C.M.*, for Dec. 5, 1828, p. 68, an introductory note stating that "we do not know that anything has been done in Maine." Cf. also *ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1829, p. 79, with a remarkable introduction by the editor; and Nov. 11, 1830, p. 5, anent British petitions to Parliament.

⁶⁵ *C.M.*, Nov. 27, 1834, p. 62; cf. *ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1833, p. 56.

⁶⁶ *C.M.*, Mar. 5, 1835, p. 120.

⁶⁷ *C.M.*, Feb. 15, 1838, p. 112; cf. resolutions of the Anti-slavery Soc. of Winthrop, *ibid.*, Aug. 3, 1837, p. 206; at Minot, *ibid.*, Sept. 28, 1837, p. 32.

⁶⁸ Art. I, Section 8, paragraph 17.

States when ceding the territory.⁶⁹ In 1837 this matter was brought up in the Legislature of Maine by petitions that this body should instruct the Senators from the State, and request the members from Maine of the House of Representatives at Washington, to use their influence there to effect the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District. The lower House in the State Legislature referred the petitions to a committee, but the State Senate laid them on the table *for a century!* Rev. David Thurston, of Winthrop, then agent in the State for the American Society, appeared before a committee of the Legislature and others at a public hearing, vigorously urging such legislative instructions. The following year, however, the lower House passed a resolution of condemnation of the continuance of the condition at Washington, the resolution being defeated in the State Senate by one vote only.⁷⁰

The Domestic Slave-Trade. The underlying motive for the urgency of the anti-slavery advocates in regard to the situation in the District of Columbia was that it was one of the chief marts for the domestic slave-trade with the southwest.⁷¹ This trade, therefore, came in for persistent and emphatic condemnation by the anti-slavery societies; as did also the matter of extension of slave territory. One of the earliest local anti-slavery societies in the State, that of Weld, as early as 1834, in a resolution passed by this Society of "Mountaineers," "invite their brethren of the South . . . to prevent the extension of this oppressive evil . . . and to raise their hands and voices against the admission of any more States or Territories into the Union, under circumstances which shall entail the same evils upon others, under which they are now so deeply suffering."⁷² The concrete opportunity for such extension of slave territory during the fourth and fifth decades was primarily presented by Texas declaring its independence. Since Texas al-

⁶⁹ *C.M.*, Jan. 18, 1838, p. 95.

⁷⁰ *C.M.*, Apr. 27, p. 149; May 11, p. 157, 1837; Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 61.

⁷¹ Cf. e.g., the memorial in *C.M.*, Nov. 14, 1833, p. 56.

⁷² *C.M.*, July 17, 1834, pp. 193 f.

ready had slavery, the immediate question was its admission to the Union, which, after a long and exciting political controversy, was brought about in 1845.⁷³

Extension of Slave Territory: Texas. The anti-slavery Societies of the North vigorously fought every phase of the slavery situation, the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia, the domestic slave-trade, and the extension of slave territory, especially the admission of Texas with already existing slavery. Thus, for example, in Maine, the Anti-slavery Society of Winthrop, always under the leadership of Rev. David Thurston, at a meeting on the Fourth of July, 1836, passed, with nine other resolutions regarding slavery, the following:

"4. Resolved, That Texas will have no just claim to independence till she shall guarantee freedom to all her citizens without distinction of color; and satisfy the world that she has just cause of revolt from Mexico."⁷⁴ A year later, this same Society, at their meeting on Fourth of July, passed a series of ten resolutions, the eighth reading, "Resolved, That the people of the free States, laden with memorials and petitions, ought immediately to knock at the doors of Congress, and ask for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and also of the slave-trade; and, if Congress will not hear, to seek relief at the ballot-box."⁷⁵ At the time of taking this action Mr. Thurston was absent from his parish as agent for the American Anti-slavery Society. On September 21, of the same year, the Winthrop Society, met to consider a defense of its action of the Fourth of July previous against the criticisms of the editor of the *Mirror*, not only published a long defense, written by Mr. Thurston, but, along with this, the following resolution regarding Texas, "Resolved, That the proposal to annex Texas to the United States should awaken the deepest concern, and call forth the prayers and efforts of all friends of

⁷³ The status of Florida, admitted also in 1845, presented a less opportunity for the extension of slavery.

⁷⁴ *C.M.*, Aug. 11, 1836, p. 2.

⁷⁵ *C.M.*, Aug. 3, 1837, p. 206. These resolutions, communicated to the *Mirror*, were the subject of a characteristic editorial, printed on p. 207.

human rights, that God would graciously avert such an evil.”⁷⁶ Similar resolutions respecting the various phases of the situation were passed at a meeting of the Minot Anti-slavery Society, on the 8th of September, 1837, and directed to be published in the *Christian Mirror*, and Garrison’s *Liberator*;⁷⁷ and, at a meeting of citizens held in the North church in Belfast, November 28, 1837, a series of resolutions respecting the then recent slaying of Rev. E. P. Lovejoy, closing with a ringing resolution opposing the proposed admission of Texas, all introduced by a committee of which Rev. Silas McKeen, pastor of Belfast First, was chairman. These resolutions when published were accompanied by a letter from Mr. McKeen, on “The Alton Massacre,” and by another from Rev. Charles Freeman, of Limerick, growing out of the same event, and revealing a growing sternness of opposition to slavery and slave holders typical of many ministers and laymen.⁷⁸ Even the editor of the *Mirror* cautiously puts himself on record in 1837 against the admission of Texas,⁷⁹ and more decidedly over six years later, on the eve of that event, with an excellent statement of the reasons against annexation.⁸⁰ The scathing comment in 1836 of the Executive Committee of the Maine Union in behalf of the Colored Race, the temporary organization of the “Moderates,” on the attitude of the Texans, has already been quoted.⁸¹ Of course, there was uniformly decided condemnation by the Anti-slavery Societies and Conventions of the war with Mexico over Texas.⁸²

Political Position of the Local Conferences and the State Conference. Now, in view of this long continuing and practically unanimous condemnation, by Anti-slavery Societies, by

⁷⁶ *C.M.*, Oct. 12, 1837, p. 38.

⁷⁷ *C.M.*, Sept. 28, 1837, p. 32.

⁷⁸ *C.M.*, Dec. 7, 1837, p. 70.

⁷⁹ *C.M.*, Aug. 10, 1837, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *C.M.*, Mar. 28, 1844, p. 139.

⁸¹ See *ante*, p. 63.

⁸² E.g., Washington County Anti-slavery Convention, see *Mirror*, Apr. 1, 1847, p. 141; The General Religious Anti-slavery Convention for Maine, see *Mirror*, Jan. 28, 1847, p. 106.

Religious Anti-slavery Conventions, and even by "Moderates," such as the editor of the *Mirror* and the Maine Union, of slavery in the District of Columbia, of the domestic slave-trade, and of the annexation of Texas, it is very remarkable that no explicit word is spoken on any one of these matters by any local Conference in the State, much less by the State Conference. And on the matter of the war with Mexico the same is true, except for the Franklin Conference. This body, ever valiantly outspoken on the slavery issue, spoke out on this war, at its session at New Sharon, in June, 1847, thus,

"Resolved, That we regard the present war of this country with a sister republic, as the offspring of slavery; that we consider it a reproach to our nation, a disgrace to humanity, and an insult to God; and that it becomes us as Christians fervently to pray that it may be speedily ended . . . leaving to both nations the possession and enjoyment of their original rights, with not a foot of free Mexican soil converted into an area for the extension of American slavery."⁸³ Such uniform refraining from expression of feeling or opinion regarding matters, of course primarily political but ultimately involving moral issues, shows how wary the churches were of giving ground for the charge that they were meddling with politics.⁸⁴ On the other hand, as the preceding narrative abundantly demonstrates, many of the local Conferences, and to some extent the State Conference, went to great lengths in the expression of their opinions and judgments regarding the position of many ministers and churches, and regarding interchurch fellowship.⁸⁵

⁸³ *C.M.*, June 24, 1847, p. 190.

⁸⁴ This wariness came to excellent expression, in No. V, of a series of articles which Dr. Enoch Pond, President of Bangor Seminary, wrote on Slavery and published in the *Mirror*, see *Mirror* for Mar. 12, 1846, p. 132.

⁸⁵ Cf. further an open letter "to the ministers and members of churches in the United States in which slavery is tolerated," sent out by a religious convention of all denominations held in Hallowell, in January, 1844, the committee writing the letter headed by Rev. David Thurston; also the resolutions passed at a meeting of the interdenominational "Religious Anti-slavery Convention in Waldo County," held in Brooks, in March, 1846, at which Rev. Stephen Thurston, and Rev. Luther Wiswall were prominent, see *Mirror*, Nov. 7, 1844, p. 57; Mar. 26, 1846, p. 137; also *ibid.*, Jan. 28, 1847, pp. 106 and 110.

DIVISION IV

THE FIFTIES: THE GATHERING STORM

The Historical Setting. The Federal historical setting for the anti-slavery movement in Maine during the fifties, as of all the States of the Union during those fateful years, comprised three chief events. The first of these was the enactment in 1850 of a series of Compromises, introduced into Congress by Henry Clay of Kentucky, and given powerful endorsement by no less an advocate than Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. These Compromises were, in lowest terms, four in number, two favorable to the North and to anti-slavery, viz., the admission of California as a free State, and the prohibition of the domestic slave-trade (but not slavery) in the District of Columbia; and two favorable to the South and slavery, viz., the organization of the territories of Utah and New Mexico, including the present States of Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and parts of Colorado and Wyoming, more than half of it lying north of $36^{\circ}30'$, without restriction as to slavery; and the marked sharpening of the Fugitive Slave Law. The second of these major events was the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854, organizing the territories of Kansas and Nebraska (not to be confounded with the present States) and opening the vast territory north of $36^{\circ}30'$ from the Mississippi to the Pacific ocean, with the exception of Missouri, Iowa and a part of Minnesota on the east and California on the west, to slavery on the principle of popular ("squatter") sovereignty; of course, a manifest nullification of the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The third of these major events was the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1857,

denying that under the Constitution either negro slaves, or their descendants, slave or free, could become citizens of the United States; and, incidentally, declaring that the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional.

The Revised Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Of the Compromises of 1850, the most immediate and powerful in its effect on the North was the Fugitive Slave Law. As contrasted with the original law of 1793, it employed for its enforcement in the free States all the executive forces, regular or special, of the Federal government; there could be no trial by jury; a fugitive could not testify in his own behalf; the fact of the flight and the identity of the fugitive were determinable only by *ex parte* testimony. In varying degree the northern States were all profoundly stirred by it. The "Underground Railroad" was greatly extended. Beginning with Vermont in 1850, every New England State except New Hampshire, and several of the States west of New England revised their Personal Liberty Laws in order as far as possible to nullify the efficacy of the Fugitive Slave Law. Maine did not so revise its law till 1855 and 1857. These Personal Liberty Laws stirred the South to exasperation. On the other hand, the severity of the Fugitive Slave Law defeated its own aim. Under the law of 1793 there had been comparatively few cases of seizure of fugitive slaves. Under the law of 1850 more seizures took place during the year following its enactment than in all the years from 1793 to 1850, keeping the North in a constant state of exasperation and turbulence.

Attitude of Maine. Of course, Maine lay farthest from the chief scenes of trouble. It is clear from the late date of Maine's revision of her Personal Liberty Law that public sentiment in the State in 1850 was either not aroused or was divided. Both conditions obtained. In Congress her senators and representatives were divided in opinion over the Compromises. Senator Bradbury voted in favor, Senator Hannibal Hamlin against them. In each of the two principal po-

litical parties in the State there was a very large pro-slavery section, larger in the Democratic than in the Whig party. Neither party would endanger political success by espousing the anti-slavery reform. Hence the organization of the Liberty Party in 1840, polling in that year in Maine only 194 votes for its national party candidates out of a total cast in the State of 93,007. It is true that this insignificant number increased to 4,836 out of a total of 84,933 in 1844, and to 12,096 out of a total of 87,101 in 1848, but, even so, this number did not present any very serious threat to the dominance of one or the other of the older parties.

Attitude of the Churches and Ministers. Such was the political situation in the State when, in 1850, the South made its first great move to make slavery permanently the dominant political power in the Union. Naturally, so far as the churches as such were concerned, the aspect of the Compromises and especially of the new Fugitive Slave Law which most drew out their interest was the moral. If really anti-slavery in conviction, even if not abolitionist, they were face to face with the dilemma, — obedience to the law of the land or to their consciences. Forthwith, pulpits throughout the North, many of them having hitherto eschewed politics, and especially anti-slavery reform, as a fit subject for a sermon, were preaching on the age-old dilemma. The abolitionist had no question; it was the "Moderate" who was perplexed. The abolitionist had helped force the issue; the "Moderate" was having the issue forced.

Position of Rev. John O. Fiske of Bath. On December 19, 1850, Rev John Orr Fiske, pastor of Winter Street church, Bath, in succession to Rev. John W. Ellingwood, preached a sermon from Romans 13:1, entitled "The Duty of Obedience to the Laws," which, coming so soon after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, and being published in full in the *Mirror*,¹ received marked attention. The tenor of the sermon, coming

¹ Feb. 6, 1851, p. 116.

from a pastor who was a leader in the Lincoln Conference, can easily be surmised. He first treated the matter of obedience to law in general under two heads, first, "that such obedience is commanded directly by God"; and, second, "that for each individual to claim the right, whenever he thinks it best, to disobey the regularly established laws of the land, leads directly to anarchy and the overthrow of all government." The larger part of the sermon was devoted to the Fugitive Slave Law itself. "That law," he declares, "ought to be obeyed, unless some express, written divine statute to the contrary can be produced. There is no such written statute, to my knowledge, in all the word of God. This is the only safe ground. Hardly one doctrine can be conceived more mischievous than the right of an individual, upon the suggestions of *his own conscience* alone to disobey the established laws of the land. *No written command of God forbidding us to return that slave can be adduced.*" The preacher then proceeds to buttress his position from the Scriptures. Having so done, he exhorts his hearers to allay the bitter strife over the law "in order the most effectually and speedily to remove the evils of slavery itself," and "in order to perpetuate the government under which we live," threatened by the "efforts of fanatics, of designing and selfish politicians," the agitation "tending directly to violate the Constitution and to effect disunion." "At present this compact, this solemn covenant [i.e., in the Constitution], must be kept unbroken, or the fair fabric of our government must be shattered and fall."

Action of Franklin Conference. At the next meeting of the State Conference (which during all the early years of this decade was wholly silent on the slavery issue), held in Yarmouth, as delegates to the General Assembly of the Presbyterians, Old School, Rev. J. O. Fiske from Lincoln Conference was appointed primary, and Rev. J. J. Carruthers, D.D., of the Cumberland Conference, as substitute. This appointment and the situation in general in the country called out the following

resolutions from the Franklin Conference, at their next session, held June 15, 1852, at Industry: ²

"Resolved, That we bear our earnest and decided testimony against the Fugitive Slave Law as a most Heaven daring attempt on the part of our Government to nullify the Law of God, the operation of which has been the breaking of Christian churches, the sundering of family ties, and the scattering of large and interesting communities of our colored brethren."

"Resolved, That the Maine Conference of Congregational churches be, and hereby is, earnestly desired to withhold fellowship from slaveholding ecclesiastical bodies by ceasing to send delegates to the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian church." ³

"Resolved, That we regard the appointment of Rev. J. O. Fiske by the last Conference as the representative of the churches, and the exponent of the religion that obtains in our denomination, as a direct contradiction of the oft-repeated assertion, that we must continue this fellowship that we may thus have opportunity of laboring for their reform." ⁴

These resolutions the delegates of the local Conference to the General Conference were instructed to present to the latter body. It is worthy of note that at this same meeting of the Franklin Conference Rev. Isaac Rogers, pastor at Farmington since 1826, commended to the attention of the Conference Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which had appeared in book form the previous March.

The printing at length of Mr. Fiske's sermon in the *Mirror*, and utterances of the editor himself in line with his well known views as a "Moderate," brought upon the paper and its editor very sharp criticisms from various quarters, on the ground not

² This Conference had reiterated its general position in a resolution passed at their meeting a year earlier, June 17, 1851, at Phillips, see *Mirror* for July 3, 1851, p. 197.

³ Resolutions similar to these first two were passed at the June meeting of this Conference in 1853, see *Mirror*, July 12, 1853, p. 200.

⁴ For a reply, apparently, by Mr. Fiske to this, and probably other criticisms of his position, see *C.M.*, Aug. 3, 1852, p. 1.

only of the plain inhumanity of the Fugitive Slave Law, but also because of the use of the paper and of the pulpits it chiefly represented for political preaching, against which the *Mirror* had consistently and vigorously inveighed. However, "the shoe was now on the other foot," "Moderate" instead of Abolitionist.⁵

Action of Other Local Conferences. More pointed and emphatic action had been taken by the Piscataquis Conference, at its meeting at Dexter, January 21, 1851, through the following resolution, passed unanimously, "Resolved, That while we acknowledge our duty to be subject unto 'the powers that be,' we owe superior allegiance to the Highest, to whom power belongeth: and that, as touching the *Fugitive Slave Law*, we are not careful to answer Congress in this matter, except to say we shall not obey its abominable mandate, but, if the panting fugitive needs our aid, we shall give it, ever ready to pray and labor for universal liberty, and the reign of righteousness and peace."⁶ At a meeting of the Waldo Conference held at Thorndike, in October, 1850, Rev. Stephen Thurston, of Searsport, characterized the Fugitive Slave Law "as worthy to be reckoned only in the code of Draco, whose laws were written in blood."⁷ This same Conference at their meeting at North Belfast, in June, 1852, passed the following resolutions, presented by Rev. Luther Wiswall, of Jackson and Brooks:

"Resolved, That civil government is an ordinance of God, and, as such, should be honored and obeyed."

"Resolved, That whenever those who administer the government transcend their rightful authority and enact statutes in conflict with the Divine law, we are not morally bound to respect them as law."

⁵ *C.M.*, Aug. 22, p. 18; Dec. 5, p. 78, 1850; Feb. 4, p. 114; Feb. 20, p. 121; Mar. 6, p. 130, 1851, for editorial expression. For criticism, Mar. 6, p. 129; Mar. 27, p. 141; Apr. 17, p. 153, 1851, by "B.C."; May 8, p. 165, 1851, by Gilman Rider.

⁶ *C.M.*, Feb. 6, 1851, p. 114.

⁷ *C.M.*, Nov. 28, 1850, p. 73.

"Resolved, That if such statutes require us to do what God's law forbids, we are morally bound *not* to obey, and that, in the last resort it is the *right* and *duty* of each individual to judge for himself when there is such conflict; and *this right of private judgment* lies at the foundation of civil and religious liberty."⁸

At a meeting of the Cumberland Conference, held at Gray, in June, 1852, Dr. George E. Adams, of Brunswick First, discussed the topic of human liberty, evidently in view of the immediate situation, but he had now been living and working for more than twenty-three years in the atmosphere of Cumberland Conference, and the temper of his treatment, so far as reported,⁹ is quite other than that of his communication to the editor of the *Mirror* after he had attended the meeting in Augusta, in October, 1834, at which the State Anti-slavery Society had been organized.¹⁰

The Controversy over Rev. J. W. Chickering. Meantime an interesting and illuminating episode in the life of the Maine churches had given rise to much discussion. In 1851 the State Conference, as it on occasion sometimes did, sent a representative to the meetings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. This time the representative was Rev. John W. Chickering, of the High Street church, Portland. Both privately and publicly in Great Britain Mr. Chickering was closely questioned as to the slavery situation and sentiment in America and especially in the American churches. He replied to his questioners in such fashion as to give the impression not only that nearly all New England Congregational churches and ministers, and the churches of the Northern States,¹¹ but he himself, was abolitionist in principle, according to the under-

⁸ *C.M.*, June 22, 1852, p. 186.

⁹ *C.M.*, July 6, 1852, p. 193.

¹⁰ Cf. *ante*, pp. 53 f.

¹¹ See *M.G.C.*, for 1852, pp. 8 and 28, for the record of his report to the State Conference; "redeemed from any sympathy with slave-holders," are the words used here.

standing of the term by the British public in general, or, as Mr. Lewis Tappan later worded it, "if not an abolitionist, a strong and decided practical anti-slavery man." At any rate, the British received him as one of themselves. Mr. Lewis Tappan, of New York, connected with, and a leader in, the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society, wrote a friend in London accusing Mr. Chickering of being abolitionist in England while at home he "has never favored the cause of Emancipation, and has been considered a Conservative and pro-slavery man." The editor of the *British Banner*, the organ of British Congregationalists, came to the defense of Mr. Chickering with a long editorial, later published in full in the *Mirror*, as brutally vituperative as almost anything Mr. Garrison himself could have written. This was followed somewhat later, after hearing from Mr. Chickering himself, by another editorial in the *Banner*, in general of even more condemnatory a tone toward Mr. Tappan than the first. This also was published at length in the *Mirror*. Mr. Tappan naturally defended himself by sending a reply, with substantiating documents, to the *Banner*; and also, because the editorials of the *Banner* had been republished in the *Mirror*, accompanied by editorials scarcely less outspoken than those of the *Banner*, asked, and was very grudgingly given, opportunity to reply through the *Mirror*. His reply appeared in four issues of the paper at irregular intervals during March, April and May, 1852. In connection with these he produced the chief of the thirteen witnesses upon whom he had relied for his statement of Mr. Chickering's position in the American situation. Among these were letters from Rev. Austin Willey, editor of the State anti-slavery paper now known as the *Inquirer*, from the Hon. Samuel Fessenden, of Portland, and others of that city, and from Rev. David Thurston. In the course of his defense which accompanied Mr. Tappan's letters to the *Mirror*, Mr. Chickering wrote, "I am not connected with societies, conventions, a political party, etc., commonly styled 'abolition' . . . and I never shall be thus con-

nected, no matter what many excellent men do or may do, until the controlling influences and the pervading spirit of those associations shall be greatly changed." Of similar tenor was his statement more particularly of his political position as follows, "He [i.e., Mr. Chickering, replying to a query in one of Mr. Tappan's letters] never votes any ticket; and does not intend to, or publicly to recommend it, until he finds among the motley variety of Liberty, Third Party, Free Soil and Coalition parties some one the support of which is, in his opinion, 'likely to accomplish something for the cause of Emancipation.'"

In the whole of this long and plain speaking controversy, the two major disputants, Mr. Chickering and Mr. Tappan, are by far the most courteous and Christianlike. The controversy made perfectly plain the need of defining terms at the outset to the end of mutual understanding, for if "anti-slavery" and "abolitionist" tended to be confused in Great Britain they certainly were not in America. It was also made perfectly evident that the situation in Great Britain and that in America were quite different; that the British did not have an adequate conception of that difference; nor especially, despite all their interest in the conditions in the United States, realize the depth of feeling produced by the Fugitive Slave Law. Finally, as nothing else in over twenty years of the anti-slavery struggle in Maine, had this controversy revealed the perplexed uncertainty and helplessness of mind of the "Moderates" over the now rapidly intensifying situation, and equally, on the other hand, the grim and rugged determination of the out-and-out abolitionists. This was in 1852. Within four years, under the sledge-hammer blows of the enacting of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the bloody scenes in Kansas, a party was to be born which was "to accomplish something for the cause of Emancipation."¹²

¹² *C.M.*, June 19, p. 190; Dec. 30, pp. 85 f., 1851; Feb. 17, p. 114; Mar. 2, p. 122; Apr. 20, p. 149; Apr. 27, p. 153; and May 4, p. 157, 1852. For a similar controversy between Rev. John O. Fiske, of Bath, and his critics, see *Mirror*, Aug. 3, 1852, p. 1.

The Albany Convention of 1852. In October, 1852, there met at Albany, New York, the first council representative of American Congregationalists as a body that had met since the Cambridge Synod of 1646-48. There were four hundred and sixty-three representatives present from seventeen States. Of these, naturally, the largest number came from New England, over three hundred in all. Maine, farthest of the New England States from the place of meeting, had only six representatives. The State Conference at the annual meeting in June, at Searsport, had voted "approval of the general idea of the Convention, and recommended the attendance of any brethren who might find it convenient to be present."¹³ Rev. William T. Dwight, D.D., of the Portland Third church, was elected President of the Convention. Among the items of business before the Convention was one on "the system and operations of the American Home Missionary Society." It must not be forgotten that in 1801 the "Plan of Union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists," governing the operations of the two denominations on home missionary ground, had been adopted, and had worked disastrously for Congregationalists in the West. This "Plan" was abrogated at the Albany Convention. As in the case of the American Board in the previous decade, so during the early years of this decade strong objections to the system and operations of the American Home Missionary Society had been made, especially in the Middle West, because aid was given to churches which included slaveholders in their membership. The situation was complicated because of the connection with the Presbyterians in the "Plan." The abrogation of the "Plan" by the Convention eased the situation to some extent but not wholly. The Convention approved in general the procedure of the Home Missionary Society, but on the question of missionary aid to churches in slaveholding States took the following special action:

"Resolved, That, in the opinion of this Convention, it is

¹³ *M.G.C.*, 1852, p. 7.

the tendency of the Gospel, wherever it is preached in its purity, to correct all social evils, and to destroy sin in all its forms; and that it is the duty of Missionary Societies to grant aid to churches in slaveholding States, in the support of such ministers only as shall so preach the Gospel, and inculcate the principles and application of Gospel discipline, that, with the blessing of God, it shall have its full effect in awakening and enlightening the moral sense in regard to Slavery, and in bringing to pass the speedy abolition of that stupendous wrong; and that, wherever a minister is not permitted so to preach, he should, in accordance with the directions of Christ in such cases, 'depart out of that city.'"¹⁴ So far as noted this action was noticed in Maine only by the Piscataquis Conference, which at its meeting in Monson, in December, 1852, took the following action, unanimously voted:

"Resolved, That we have noticed with lively interest the action of the Congregational Convention held in Albany in October last, and *particularly* with regard to missionary labor in States where slavery exists. We cherish the deep conviction that the rule they propose in regard to that matter is the only one sanctioned by the spirit of the gospel, and the only one that can consistently be adopted by any missionary association; and we earnestly hope the American Home Missionary Society will make it the unvarying law of their action."¹⁵

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In the main the year 1853 was one of comparative quiet in Maine Congregational churches, the deep agitation over the revised Fugitive Slave Law having considerably subsided.¹⁶ But worse was to follow in 1854. By the Gadsden purchase, consummated December 30, 1853, the boundary between the United States and Mexico, which had

¹⁴ Cong'l Year-Book, 1854, pp. 338-348. *C.M.*, Oct. 19, p. 46; Dec. 7, p. 73, 1852.

¹⁵ *C.M.*, Jan. 4, 1853, p. 89.

¹⁶ The country at large thought that the Compromises had settled the slavery matter for all time; cf. Smith, *Parties and Slavery*, Chap. III, in the series, *The American Nation*.

been in dispute since the close of the Mexican War in 1848, was determined, the United States paying Mexico ten million dollars for a narrow strip between the Rio Grande and Gila rivers, or between the boundaries of Texas and California. By the purchase, 45,000 square miles of territory was thus added to that vast territory already lying south of the parallel $36^{\circ} 30'$ of the Missouri Compromise of 1820. This was preliminary to the next and more ominous move of the forces favorable to slavery, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, opening nearly all the territory of the Louisiana purchase and the Oregon region to possible extension of slavery on the principle of popular sovereignty. This bill passed the Senate in March, and the House in May. Its passage was a nullification of the Missouri Compromise. It glaringly revealed to the anti-slavery North that the slave-holding South was "an *imperium in imperio*." It has been characterized as "the grossest political blunder in American History." This and the election of Franklin Pierce as President in 1852 were the death blow to the old Whig party, which, by its paltering policy respecting slavery, had long since lost the support of all determined anti-slavery, or abolition forces. The Liberty party of 1840, which had become the Free-Soil party in 1852, now rapidly became, first the "Anti-Nebraska Men" (controlling the House of Representatives in 1855), and in 1856 the Republican party. The political fat was in the fire.

Action of the State Conference. The State Conference, after its critical reception in 1850 of the "Memorials pertaining to Slavery, and Correspondence with Slave-holding Bodies," virtually kept silent for three years. Wholly so in 1851, as far as the printed minutes reveal, and by the testimony of a keen, if not always wise critic, who wrote, "not a word was heard for the slaves in prayer, and some resolutions simply asserting the duty of obedience to God's law against man's, handed to the committee [of arrangements], were withheld."¹⁷

¹⁷ Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 376.

As already noted, Rev. J. O. Fiske, of Bath, and Rev. J. J. Carruthers, of Portland, were appointed delegates from the Conference to the Presbyterian General Assembly, Old School. In 1852, the State Conference had received Mr. Chickering's report of his visit to England,¹⁸ and also listened to Professor C. E. Stowe, husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe, and a member of the Faculty of Bowdoin College, in an address on "The Duty of American Churches respecting Slavery and the colored population generally," an address which roused no controversy, and which was followed by another by Rev. N. Shotwell, of Virginia, with a distinctly southern, apologetic note. The Conference itself took no action.¹⁹ In 1853, the Conference was again utterly silent.²⁰ This silence of years, however, was at last broken in 1854 by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and the shock given by it to the entire North. Rev. William T. Dwight, of Portland Third church, who, as far as this investigation goes, had not thus far publicly given any evidence of his position, was present at the meeting in Bangor, though not as a delegate from Cumberland Conference, and offered a resolution, "sustained in a speech of great power" (according to all reporters), which lasted for fifty minutes. Such was the "commanding force" of his speech, and such the intensity of the now aroused public interest that the Conference listened for two hours and a half to the discussion which ensued and then unanimously adopted Dr. Dwight's resolution. This read as follows: "Resolved, That the recent action of the National Congress which opens to Slavery a vast territory heretofore regarded as secured to Freedom by solemn and time-honored compact, meets with our strongest disapprobation and dissent, and we feel called upon, as Christian citizens, to resist the effects of this action in all proper ways, as being a flagrant breach of faith; as extending a system which is essentially and

¹⁸ See *ante*, pp. 160 f.

¹⁹ *M.G.C.*, 1852, p. 5; *Mirror*, June 29, 1852, p. 190; Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 392.

²⁰ *M.G.C.*, 1853; Willey, as above, p. 416.

wholly wrong; as providing for the dooming of other millions to be crushed by the same system; as bringing into jeopardy the continuance of our Union; as making us the scorn of the other nations of the earth; as exposing us to the judgments of Almighty God; and, finally, as creating formidable obstructions to the progress of Christ's Kingdom in the world."²¹ The Oxford Conference, meeting at Bethel Hill in October, 1854, not having expressed itself for some time on slavery, cordially endorsed the utterance of the General Conference at Bangor in June.²² Such an indictment of Slavery, it would seem, the State Conference had never before heard, at any rate from a member of Cumberland Conference. It reads like the expression of long pent up thought and feeling. Evidently while the pastor of Third church had mused the fire had burned. The editor of the *Mirror* comments on the evening as follows: "The resolution was adopted by the Conference, and the whole assembly, — the largest there had been together in the two days. The interest was intense, and cost the worthy moderator considerable vigilance and effort to keep down obstreperous manifestations of applause."²³

Action of Cumberland Conference. It is of no little interest to note that at the meeting of the Cumberland Conference at Standish, two weeks earlier, the Conference broke with its entire past history and at last uttered itself in a series of resolutions of no uncertain sound, as follows:

"Resolved, That as American citizens we recognize the hand of God, and the influence of His word, in laying the foundations of our civil and religious liberties.

"Resolved, That the spirit of Christianity which has ever proved eminently conservative of human rights, should still be relied upon as a leading agency in sustaining and preserving our free institutions.

²¹ *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 6; Willey, *op. cit.*, pp. 465 f.; *C.M.*, July 4, 1854, p. 194.

²² *C.M.*, Nov. 7, 1854, p. 57.

²³ *C.M.*, as above.

"Resolved, That it is the duty of Christian men, by individual and associated action, to oppose in all lawful and Christian modes, every encroachment upon our personal and national liberties and the rights of man.

"That, in the opinion of this Conference, a most solemn crisis in the history of our country is approaching; indicated by the persistent, increasing, and hitherto successful demands of that Power which threatens, in disregard of sacred compacts, to subjugate Northern freemen as well as Southern slaves.

"Resolved, That it is highly important for the church and ministry to meet this crisis with courage and wisdom; and while they discountenance all tendencies to violence and anarchy, to throw the whole weight of their influence where the whole might of Christianity is cast, into the scale of Freedom against oppression.

"Resolved, That prayer be made unto God continually — the God of our Fathers, — in whose hands all the interests of truth and righteousness are safe, in full faith that He will not suffer our country to become, in these days of advancing liberty in the world, the last home of oppression." ²⁴

Here is a new note. Can it be that the spirit of Kennebec, Somerset and Franklin Conferences, those war-horses "that smelleth the battle afar off," had moved down from their inland hills and taken possession of this coastal, commercial Conference — and of the State Conference? For, there is a boldness, determination, vigor about the resolutions of the former and that of the latter that betray a new leader, and there are not wanting internal evidences that the author of the one was also the author of the others. Anyway, for Cumberland here was a new, almost defiant note.

Lincoln Conference. There was even a hint of a new spirit in the resolutions passed by Lincoln, now called Lincoln and Sagadahoc Conference, which met the same days in early June as did Cumberland, presented by Rev. Uriah Balkam, of Wis-

²⁴ *C.M.*, June 20, 1854, p. 196; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 17.

casset (where the Lincoln County Anti-slavery Society had been formed) and passed unanimously:

“Resolved, That the mission of the church is especially and eminently a spiritual and moral one; but that, in order to its fulfilment, her members must maintain the truest conscientiousness and the highest moral freedom, in reference to all secular and civil affairs.

“Resolved, That it is the privilege and the duty of the clergy to apply the morality of the Gospel plainly and frequently to all classes of employments, and all classes of persons, as their own Christian judgments may from time to time dictate.

“Resolved, That the objections so commonly made against what is termed a one-sided presentation of subjects from the pulpit, lie against the institute of preaching itself, and that we refer them to the Author of this divine mode of instruction.”²⁵

This was Mr. Balkam’s farewell, as it were, to the Lincoln Conference, since the following October he removed to Lewiston, in the Cumberland Conference.

The unanimity with which these resolutions were passed indicates that such members of the Lincoln Conference as Rev. J. O. Fiske had more or less shifted their ground. Evidence of this in regard to Mr. Fiske is found in a long letter to an unrevealed correspondent of his which Mr. Fiske published in the *Mirror*,²⁶ in which he defended himself against a vigorous attack made on him because of his sermon on *Obedience to Law*, already mentioned. In this letter he refers to his having expressed his opinions in the discussion over Dr. Dwight’s resolution at Bangor the previous June, but is desirous of getting them a wider hearing through the *Mirror*. He now explicitly states his position thus:

“The law of God is the supreme standard of action: and if human statutes require what is manifestly contrary to God’s law, they cannot be regarded as binding a Christian.” He

²⁵ *C.M.*, July 4, 1854, p. 198; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 21.

²⁶ *C.M.*, Feb. 20, 1855, p. 113.

pleads a change in the political situation in the country as warrant for his changed, or apparently changed, position. Mr. Fiske was by no means alone in this change of position, for the evidence of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill as to what the slaveholders sought and would have, nothing less than the permanent dominance of the nation, opened the eyes of most of the "Moderates." The editor of the *Mirror* seems, however, still to be of his old mind. It is true he is opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, mainly on two grounds, viz., the industrial viciousness of the slave system, and the faithlessness to word pledged in the Missouri Compromise, but under the stress of some very keen and vigorous criticism of his "frequent thrusts, innuendoes, and proclamations of floating scandals against Abolitionists," he replies with equal vigor and less urbanity, urging his old position, "Bring forward some proposition . . . something to be done, some measure which gives promise of relief, by a peaceful and righteous process, and it shall have our countenance and cooperation" — a position of entire perplexity and helplessness, which apparently he maintained to the end of not only his editorial career, but of his life in 1856. He had made a fine reputation for himself as an editor of a paper which stood for thirty years in the front rank of the country's religious papers, but would have nothing of the abolition movement.²⁷ It was not strange that nearly thirty years of ceaseless toil and anxiety as an editor should have worn him out at the comparatively early age of sixty-five, but he would seem also to have perceived that his views on the slavery situation, even in his own Conference, had been outgrown and that he was not able to keep step with the forward movement, — was being left behind.

Action of Other Local Conferences. In the consideration of the situation created by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, Kennebec Conference contented itself with earnest prayer and an address by some unnamed person which summarized admirably

²⁷ *C.M.*, Jan. 31, p. 106; Feb. 7, p. 110; Feb. 14, p. 114; Feb. 21, p. 117; Feb. 28, p. 122; April 4, p. 141; especially June 20, p. 186, 1854.

a minister's duty as a minister and a citizen to the government.²⁸ Franklin Conference, at its session in Farmington Falls, in June, before the meeting of the General Conference in Bangor, instructed its delegates to the latter body "to urge upon that body the withdrawal of fellowship from slaveholding churches and other ecclesiastical bodies." "The hope was expressed that, in the present state of feeling on this subject in the community, the General Conference would evade its duty no longer, but take an immediate and decided step, not to give countenance to slavery, even in appearance."²⁹ Union Conference, meeting at Bridgton Center, a week later, took nearly the same ground as Franklin, instructing its delegates to General Conference "to request that body, if it should continue intercourse with slaveholding bodies, to henceforth withhold from them full Christian fellowship, and regard and treat them as we do suspended members."³⁰ The reporter (Scribe) of the Somerset Conference, for their meeting at Madison, in June, 1854, introduced his account of the resolution adopted by the Conference by writing, "Of course, the *Iniquity* recently set in motion by Diabolus, seconded by Douglas, and perpetrated by Congress, was not forgotten. The deed was too daring . . . the triumphs of Hell too infamous, to be forgotten very soon." The resolution introduced by a layman, read, "Resolved, That we, as Christian citizens, cannot withhold our voice and influence against this monster of iniquity, without being guilty of a wrong, and a glaring inconsistency with our views of allegiance to God, and our professions of a Christian spirit."³¹ The two resolutions passed by Piscataquis Conference, at their meeting at Bradford, in June, 1854, are a strong indictment of slavery and a ringing call for action, political as well as social and moral. They read:

"Resolved, That the recent action of Congress in regard to

²⁸ *C.M.*, June 20, 1854, p. 186; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 20.

²⁹ *C.M.*, June 27, 1854, p. 189; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 18.

³⁰ *C.M.*, June 27, 1854, p. 190; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 26; cf. *C.M.*, Feb. 6, 1855, p. 105.

³¹ *C.M.*, July 4, 1854, p. 193; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 24.

the territories of Nebraska and Kansas has developed, in the most astounding and alarming degree, the faithlessness, recklessness and power of Slavery in this nation, . . . action which threatens not only to open new Territories to slavery, but also to convert all the free States into slave States, revive the slave-trade, and utterly subvert the liberties and the glory of the American people.

"Resolved, That we earnestly entreat, we solemnly adjure, all the friends of freedom, and the ministers and members of Christian churches especially, to use all their religious, social and political influence . . . to work by *all judicious means*, in rousing and uniting the people of the North in firm, uncompromising and untiring efforts to resist the aggressions and rapacity of Slavery, and make our whole land truly the home and the glory of the free."³² Washington Conference, sitting in its annual meeting, at Pembroke, also in June, delivered itself thus:

"Resolved, That American slavery, which is now exciting to indignation and horror the humane and Christian world, is our crying national sin, and a chief impediment to the success of a pure Gospel; and that no man can give it ecclesiastical or political support without compromising his Christian character.

"Resolved, That the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the recent repeal of the Missouri Compromise show that the time has come for united, uncompromising, strenuous effort on the part of all Christians, ministers and laymen, for the restriction and ultimate entire abolition of Slavery."³³ Finally, Aroostook Conference, at its meeting in Burlington in the last week in June, 1854, after expressing its grief over "such an alarming degree of depravity in men of public trust" as was manifested by Congress enacting the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, thus declared itself:

"Resolved, That we are hereby most solemnly admonished

³² *C.M.*, July 4, 1854, p. 193; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 24.

³³ *C.M.*, July 18, 1854, p. 201; *M.G.C.*, 1854, p. 28.

to be more vigilant in the use of all justifiable religious and political means to stay the extension of slave territory, to produce the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law, and the abolition of American slavery.

“Resolved, That inasmuch as the great protest of the clergy against the iniquity was made in the name of ‘Almighty God,’ and as we would ever recognize His aid as essential to success, we will not forget at this time that our main reliance is on Him, and that He is able to overrule the wickedness of man for his own glory.”³⁴

The “protest of the clergy” mentioned in this last resolve, referred to a monster petition, or “Memorial,” signed by some three thousand of the clergy of New England, and presented by Rev. Henry M. Dexter, of Boston, to Congress, protesting against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Of the signers, Mr. Stephen A. Douglas, the framer of the bill, remarked in the Senate on its presentation, “He was sure that there could not be found throughout the country any body of men of equal number who had more ignorance upon this one subject upon which they now protested.”³⁵

Thus, on the heels of the passage of the Bill, of the then fourteen local Conferences in the State ten had uttered their condemnation of it, as also had the State Conference, with varying degrees of explicitness and severity. The most impressive characteristic of these utterances, as contrasted with those made by the local Conferences in the previous decade, is the emphasis laid on political action. The Conferences had perceived that, such was the determined support of slavery by the southern States and even churches, no moral appeal or suasion was now equal to the need. They must take to the political field, and, as has been noted, movements in the political field, independent of the church, were providing a practical medium for the expression of this conviction.

³⁴ *C.M.*, Aug. 15, 1854, p. 9.

³⁵ *C.M.*, Mar. 28, p. 138; Apr. 4, p. 141, 1854.

Renewed Colonization Movement in the State. It is a not only interesting, but curious episode of these years of excitement over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill that the American Colonization Society made another attempt to get a foothold in the State.³⁶ For a decade there had been apparently but little interest in the Society, and then suddenly there appears a revival of not only interest but activity for its especial work. In October, 1854, a Mr. Winborn Drew, of West Newfield, Maine, published in the *Mirror* a considerable communication with the caption, "Slavery — Emancipation and Colonization."³⁷ After giving his reasons for his conviction that "the immediate, entire and unconditional removal of slavery" is utterly impracticable, he brings forward the proposal, that the General Government assume responsibility for colonization in Africa of certain classes of negroes, as most likely ultimately to bring about "the final removal of this institution," i.e., slavery.³⁸ A still more curious proposal was made by an anonymous correspondent in the *Mirror* in March, 1855,³⁹ his communication being entitled "The Slavery Problem." After an admirable summary of the advances slavery had actually made in the previous quarter of a century, he asks, "What is to be done?" "Is the case hopeless?" To the latter question he answers, "No, by no means, if only Northern people can be united in doing what can be done, instead of talking only of what cannot." To his first question he replies in substance: "In the North there is a power of migration not found in the South. In the North is the disposition to migrate. First, let the stream of migration move southwest and block the South in

³⁶ A "Union Emigration Society" also was begun in Washington, in May, 1854, of which the present writer has no further knowledge, see *C.M.*, Aug. 8, 1854, p. 5.

³⁷ This article, in the case of certain alleged facts of history, was sharply challenged two weeks later by "L.W." (probably Rev. Luther Wiswall, of Windham) in an article entitled, "Proof Wanted."

³⁸ *C.M.*, Oct. 24, 1854, p. 49. Editor Cummings, an old and ardent supporter of the Colonization scheme, republished this article in the *Mirror* for Nov. 20, 1855, p. 61.

³⁹ *C.M.*, Mar. 20, 1855, p. 129.

that direction; and then let it press gently into Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky, and finally into the entire South, till slavery finally disappears from the land" — in short "squatter sovereignty" was to solve the great problem.

These two proposals are cited here in part in order to show how exercised even the common man of the time was over "the agitating question," and what strange proposals men will make when conditions such as then existed make them desperate. No such hairbrained proposal as this latter, the other proposal for Federal colonization of negroes was incomparably more difficult in 1855 than it would have been a decade, not to say a quarter of a century earlier. In 1830 there were almost exactly two million slaves in the then thirteen southern States; in 1840, two and a half millions. In 1855 these same thirteen, with Texas added, had three and a half million slaves. In 1840 the production of cotton, the chief southern commodity, was almost 800 million pounds, but, with Texas added, that amount in 1855 had been doubled. By the Kansas-Nebraska Bill the territory open to slavery was at least doubled. In the early days of the Colonization Society, and for long, its staunchest supporters were southerners, showing that many of them were really desirous of attempting to solve the patently grievous slave problem by this means, if possible. In 1855 the whole temper of the South had changed, and now the institution of negro slavery was one the vast majority of southern leaders stood ready to fight for.

Organization of a New State Colonization Society. However these things might be, sometime in 1854 a movement was on in the State to form a State Colonization Society, but the movement for some reason was temporarily arrested. Out of it eventually came a call for a meeting in City Hall, Portland, for Wednesday, February 21, 1855. The meeting was set for that date because there were to be present in Portland several distinguished Methodists from New England and the Middle States at a meeting of their denominational Tract Society. The

call was signed by men in Brunswick, Bath and Portland only, thirty-five in all. Of the seven signers from Brunswick, five were from the Bowdoin Faculty, President Woods and Professors Upham, Cleaveland, Hitchcock and Boody, besides John McKeen, a Brunswick merchant, and a lawyer, R. P. Dunlap. From Bath there were eleven signers, among them Rev. John W. Ellingwood, former pastor of the Winter Street church,⁴⁰ his successor, Rev. John O. Fiske; and Rev. Eliphalet Whittlesey, of the Third or Central church, all the Congregational churches there were in Bath at the time. Mr. Whittlesey, after service in the army and at Bowdoin College, became Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau in North Carolina. Among the seventeen signers from Portland were editor Cummings, Dr. William T. Dwight of the Third church; Rev. John W. Chickering, of the High Street church; Rev. Hugh S. Carpenter, of the then recently formed State Street church; Rev. Horatio N. Stebbins, of the First church Unitarian; but not Dr. J. J. Carruthers, of the Second church, nor Rev. Benjamin Lynch, of the Abyssinian, or colored church; also Hon. Albion K. Parris, former Governor, and Hon. Ether Shepley, Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court.⁴¹

According to call, the Convention met on the day named, first in the afternoon in the City Hall, and then in the evening in High Street church. Hon. Albion K. Parris was made chairman. Several of the men from out of the State addressed the meeting, and then it was decided to organize a State Society. Of this the Hon. Ether Shepley was made President, Mr. Philip Eastman, Recording Secretary; and thirty vice-Presidents and Managers were appointed.⁴² Among these last were President Leonard Woods, D.D., of Bowdoin College, Rev. John Maltby, of the Hammond Street church, Bangor, Rev. W. T. Dwight, D.D., of the Third church, Portland, Rev. H. S. Car-

⁴⁰ Dr. Ellingwood was President of the Bath Society, see *C.M.*, Feb. 13, 1855, p. 110.

⁴¹ *C.M.*, Feb. 13, 1855, p. 110.

⁴² *C.M.*, Feb. 27, 1855, p. 118.

penter, Portland, Rev. Caleb Hobart, of the Walnut Hill church, Yarmouth, Rev. John A. Douglass, of Waterford, and Rev. J. W. Chickering, D.D., Portland, who was also Corresponding Secretary. The thirty were from all parts of the State, but chiefly from in or near Portland. So far as recognized, the most of them were Congregationalists, either ministers or laymen.

Presence of Rev. R. R. Gurley in the State. In June, 1855, Rev. R. R. Gurley, the agent of the American Colonization Society, came into the State, speaking in the Third church, Portland, in the evening of Sunday, June 10; at the meeting of the Cumberland Conference at New Gloucester, and of Kennebec Conference at Winthrop, June 12 and 13; at the meeting of the Union Conference at Albany, June 19; and at the meeting of the State Conference in Portland, June 27.⁴³ Mr. Gurley was not regularly on the program of the Union Conference, but the Committee of Arrangements persuaded the body, with some demur, to adjourn the meeting to the morning of Wednesday and listen to Mr. Gurley Tuesday evening. This action on the Committee's part brought upon them the following day a sharp rebuke from the Conference in the form of a resolution:

"Resolved, That it shall not hereafter be deemed proper for the Committee of Arrangements of this Conference to propose to suspend the ordinary discussions of the Conference, for the purpose of listening to a lecture on any topic on which there are known to be strong feelings *pro* and *con*, without proposing also that time shall be allowed for any reply which any Brother may wish to make to the sentiments advanced."

Clearly the Committee had suppressed debate the evening before, probably out of courtesy to Mr. Gurley; but the incident shows how sensitive the public mind was at the time, and gives a hint of the small likelihood of success for the revived Colonization movement in the State.⁴⁴

⁴³ Cf. Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 457, 466.

⁴⁴ *C.M.*, June 19, p. 182; July 3, p. 190, 1855.

Proposal to Build a State Colonization Vessel. The recently formed State Society held its first annual meeting in Portland, June 28, 1855. So far as the report of the meeting reveals, Mr. Gurley was not present. Two resolutions passed seem to have been the chief business actually accomplished. The first expressed approval of the national Society and recommended its financial support. The second ran,

“Resolved, That, inasmuch as it is understood that the American Colonization Society is in want of a suitable vessel or ship of proper dimensions and construction to be exclusively under its control and in its service for the safe and comfortable conveyance of emigrants to Liberia, a Committee of seven be appointed to devise and secure the means, and, by building or purchase, to obtain a suitable ship for the Society.” The committee appointed was made up of George F. Patten and Thomas Harwood of Bath, Samuel Tyler and William Chase of Portland, Joseph Titcomb of Kennebunk, John Ham of Bangor, and A. R. Stetson of Damariscotta.

The editor of the *Mirror* soon came out with an unusually earnest and even eloquent editorial appeal for subscriptions towards the proposed vessel, and this was followed by another of greater urgency reminding givers that the time limit set for contributions was January 1, 1856. The vessel was estimated to cost \$36,000, and was to be built in Bath, the town most loyal through the years to the cause of the Colonization Society. In November, 1855, editor Cummings published another appeal for funds under the caption, “The Colonization Ship,” “the first ship in the new line to Africa,” as he had characterized it in a previous editorial. In December a committee of Portland men, supporters of the movement, made a strong appeal to Portland residents to come to the aid of Bath which had already made “a noble subscription,” but apparently the matter lagged, for George F. Patten, of Bath, the chairman of the building committee, reported receiving a letter from Rev. J. W. Chickering, Corresponding Secretary of the State Society, in which the Executive Committee of the Society pledged themselves to be

responsible for the deficiency then existing in subscriptions. In accepting this pledge Mr. Patten says that the Building Committee "feel that they assume a heavy responsibility," but propose to go forward, trusting "to the liberality of the good people of this State." The statement by Mr. Patten has a very dubious sound, and he would seem to have little confidence in the liberality of the supporters of the Colonization cause. It was not a happy situation, but fortunately for the Building Committee in their dilemma the National Society received an offer from a man in Maryland to build the ship wholly at his own expense, and as the business of the Colonization Society did not warrant at the time more than one vessel, the matter, as far as Maine was concerned, was abandoned. That is, this renewed attempt to interest Maine people in the Colonization plan signally failed.⁴⁵ At the opening of this year, 1856, Dr. Cummings, of the *Mirror*, was obliged by ill-health to surrender to another the conduct of the paper. Ardent advocate of the Colonization Society as he had always been, he was among the foremost and most liberal in his contribution for the proposed vessel, and when the plan, so far as Maine was concerned, was given up, directed that this contribution should go for the general purposes of the Society.⁴⁶ Meetings of the Maine Society continued to be held until at least the beginning of the Civil War, usually in Portland, and appeals for its support were made to the general public. Rev. Dr. Chickering, of Portland, was succeeded in the office of Corresponding Secretary by Rev. John O. Fiske, of Bath. At the annual meeting of the American Colonization Society held in 1861, Mr. Truman Clark, of Bath, was the only representative present from Maine.⁴⁷

"Compensated Emancipation." During these years, too,

⁴⁵ *C.M.*, Oct. 9, p. 38; Oct. 23, p. 46; Oct. 30, p. 50; Nov. 27, p. 66; Dec. 18, pp. 78, 80, 1855; Jan. 1, p. 84; Feb. 5, p. 105; Mar. 4, p. 121; June 24, p. 185; Oct. 28, 1856; July 7, 1857, p. 198. Rev. Austin Willey, editor of the *Inquirer*, the organ of the Abolitionists, characterized this attempt to resurrect the Colonization Society in Maine with his customary acerbity, see *Anti-slavery History*, pp. 454 f.

⁴⁶ See his biography in *C.M.*, June 24, 1856, p. 184.

⁴⁷ *C.M.*, June 24, 1856, p. 185; July 7, 1857, p. 198; July 20, p. 202, and Aug. 31, p. 17, 1858; Aug. 9, 1859, p. 6; Aug. 14, 1860, p. 14.

another plan was revived which had often been proposed at earlier stages of the anti-slavery movement in the United States, and followed successfully in the case of the slaves in the British West Indies, namely, "Compensated Emancipation." It recognized that many slaveholders would perhaps emancipate their slaves provided they could be compensated for the loss of their property, worth many millions, and the slaves be transported to Africa. The enormous expense this would involve for compensation of the owners and for transportation to Africa was to be underwritten by the Federal Government, as being too heavy a burden for individual States. The plan was plainly auxiliary to the work of the American Colonization Society. In the conditions existing in the South and with the prevailing sentiment in Congress, nothing came of it.⁴⁸

The Situation in Kansas. As a result of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, there arose a competing migration to Kansas from the slaveholding South and from the free North to preempt the region for slavery or freedom. The competing migrations soon came into conflict, resulting in "border ruffianism," or determined and bitter fighting for possession; a conflict which at the outset, because of the contiguity of slaveholding Missouri, was decided in favor of slavery, but ultimately resulted in a permanent victory for the forces of freedom from the North.

Rev. J. J. Carruthers, of Portland, in a letter to the *British Banner*, under date of June 21, 1856, succinctly described conditions in Kansas thus,

"Towns sacked, dwellings destroyed, innocence violated, and men and women wantonly driven from their homes, reduced to starvation, and murdered in cold blood; such are the scenes enacted in the middle of the nineteenth century by creatures calling themselves Christians, and — save the mark! — American patriots."⁴⁹ Maine lay too far from the murderously con-

⁴⁸ Cf. *C.M.*, Sept. 2, 1856, p. 18; Feb. 19, p. 118, and Mar. 26, p. 138, 1860.

⁴⁹ Copied in the *Mirror* for Aug. 5, 1856.

tested region to send many emigrants to share in the warfare, but some took their lives in their hands and went to "the dark and bloody ground." The sympathies of Maine people, however, were increasingly with the cause of a free State to be made out of the contested region.

Action of the State Conference in 1856. The State Conference at its meeting at Calais, in June, 1856, spent the whole of one evening in the discussion of the topic, "The duty of *Christian Men* touching the present crisis of our country." As two years previous, the leader in the discussion was Dr. William T. Dwight, of the Third church, Portland, who occupied the first hour with "eloquent speech." Besides, Rev. Asa D. Smith, D.D., of New York, delegate from the New School Presbyterian Assembly, Rev. E. F. Cutter, now editor of the *Mirror* in succession to Dr. Cummings, Rev. James Drummond of Lewiston Falls (Auburn), Dr. George E. Adams of Brunswick, Rev. Stephen Thurston of Searsport, Rev. Alfred E. Ives of Castine, and a layman, Mr. J. L. Havner of Belfast, all spoke, and the meeting was closed with fervent prayer, led by Dr. Tappan, Secretary of the Maine Missionary Society. The evening's speeches were very succinctly summarized by the Scribe of the Conference thus, "*No Extension of Slavery*. Spread light everywhere; vote for rulers who give the fairest promise of standing right on the question of *freedom for all*, and, rather than submit to the extension of slavery and to have the system entailed upon us, to resist even unto blood. God grant this necessity may never come!" Two short years had passed, and the sentiment of the Conference had deepened from readiness to take political action, to determination to fight, if God willed it. No wonder Rev. Austin Willey wrote, "Hostile influences no longer controlled the body."⁵⁰ His work was done. Like Dr. Cummings, he was forced to surrender his editorship by ill-health, he, however, having seen practically the fair fruition of his work.

⁵⁰ *M.G.C.*, 1856, pp. 12 f.; Willey, *Anti-slavery History*, p. 466.

Position of the Local Conferences. Probably in every local Conference, as in Oxford, in 1856, a place was found in the exercises for earnest prayer "in confession of our national sins, and in a plea for our deliverance from the calamities which now threaten us, and particularly for those who in Kansas are struggling for the cause of freedom."⁵¹ Franklin Conference passed resolutions regarding "American Slavery as a great political, moral and social evil, developing itself now more than ever."⁵² Penobscot Conference, silent at the time of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, now gave expression to its opinions in no uncertain words, under the caption, "Anti-Ruffian Resolutions," to the following effect: "Resolved, That the recent outrages in Kansas and Washington City, in which we discover a determined spirit of aggression on the part of the slave-power, and a deliberate purpose to make slavery national, and to crush freedom of public debate in reference to it, awaken our deep grief for the shame and peril brought thereby on the country of our birth, our hopes and our affection.

"Resolved, That in the struggle to restrain the encroachments of Slavery we recognize a continuance of the same conflict for freedom, which, with varying success, has agitated the Christian world during the entire period of this country's history.

"Resolved, That the present is an emergency imposing upon all Christian and patriotic men a sacred obligation to use all the power guaranteed to them as citizens of this Republic in an unequivocal and resolute opposition to the extension and aggrandizement of Slavery, and in defense of the Christian principles of human rights.

"Resolved, That in this struggle we recognize our dependence on God, and our obligation to pray to Him continually to preserve us from the horrors of civil war, and from the disgrace

⁵¹ *C.M.*, June 17, 1856, p. 180; *M.G.C.*, 1856, p. 28; Kennebec Conference, p. 26, and Piscataquis, p. 30, in *M.G.C.*, 1856.

⁵² *M.G.C.*, 1856, p. 24.

and ruin which must result if Slavery is permitted to be national, and the government of these United States becomes its patron and protector.”⁵³ In the same number of the *Mirror* on the same page, appears an expression of a meeting of the Faculty and students of the Bangor Theological Seminary, held on June 4, and adjourned to June 11, 1856, which because it is the first known expression of this institution on the matter since Mr. Austin Willey’s student days away back in 1837, and which the situation at the time at Bowdoin probably precluded and so it stands alone as an utterance of the higher institutions among the Congregationalists of the period, deserves record here. It runs thus:

“Resolved, That the inhuman outrages in Kansas on the rights of actual settlers, and the brutal and cowardly assault on constitutional liberty in the person of Senator Sumner — whose independent and uncompromising defense of human rights has our hearty approval — are cause of profound humiliation for the shame brought on our country, and summon us as patriots and as Christians to consecrate our energies to the cause of freedom, justice and religion in unequivocal and persevering action to restrain the aggressions of Slavery, and in unceasing prayer to the God of the oppressed to vindicate the rights of injured humanity, and to avert the dangers involved in their continued violation.”

The resolution is signed by the Chairman of the meeting, Henry A. Miner, and by the Secretary, Sidney K. B. Perkins, the former of the class of 1856, the latter of the class of 1857. Certain phrases or words common to the resolutions of the Penobscot Conference and of the resolution from the Seminary, though the latter is signed by students only, leads one to suspect that some member of the then Faculty had a hand in framing both utterances. This may well have been Professor Samuel Harris, of the chair of Christian Theology, who had joined the Faculty but the year previous, and whose splendid eloquence in

⁵³ *C.M.*, June 24, 1856, p. 183; *M.G.C.*, 1856, p. 29.

the days of the Civil War brought him into such prominence that he was talked of for the Federal Senate.

Somerset Conference, at its June meeting in Bloomfield, also passed resolutions on "the recent manifestations in Kansas and in Congress, and on the outrageous attack upon the Hon. Charles Sumner," these, as that of Bangor Seminary, having reference to the brutal assault made on Senator Sumner, of Massachusetts, in the Senate chamber, by Mr. ~~Phett Butler~~, a member of the House of Representatives.⁵⁴ Union Conference, at its June meeting at South Bridgton, passed a resolution to the effect that "American Slavery has exerted, and is exerting, a disastrous influence upon the churches and ministry of the country; and that Christian fellowship with slave-holding bodies ought to be discontinued."⁵⁵ On this latter point the Conference reverted to a position taken by it much earlier. Hancock Conference, at its October meeting, anxiously pondered on "the duty of Christians in respect to the state of our country."⁵⁶ So far as noted, Aroostook, Cumberland, Lincoln and Sagadahoc, Waldo, Washington and York Conferences were silent in 1856.

In 1857, Oxford Conference, at their June meeting at Dixfield, as Hancock Conference the year before, discussed anxiously the problem of "what are the duties the exigencies of the times demand of Christians," and considered their civic, as well as other duties.⁵⁷ Kennebec Conference had the ever present problem of slavery before it; Cumberland considered the very general matter of "civil and religious liberty to all men"; and Waldo declared unanimously "that the continuance of correspondence between the General Conference and the Presbyterian church was inexpedient."⁵⁸ Ten of the Conferences were silent. Al-

⁵⁴ *C.M.*, June 3, p. 172; July 8, p. 192, 1856; *M.G.C.*, 1856, p. 31.

⁵⁵ *M.G.C.*, 1856, p. 32.

⁵⁶ *M.G.C.*, 1857, p. 36.

⁵⁷ *M.G.C.*, 1857, p. 40; cf. also p. 36, Franklin Conference.

⁵⁸ *M.G.C.*, 1857, pp. 5, 45.

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though the situation in the South was steadily worsening; the border warfare in Kansas, the prelude to the long and bloody civil conflict of 1861 to 1865, still continued; and the Dred Scott case was being heard and decided in the Supreme Court of the United States, the Court incidentally asserting that the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional; yet, the silence on the part of the Conferences deepened. Neither in 1858 nor in 1859, nor in part of 1860, was there any direct utterance on the part of a single Conference regarding the momentous issue, only on an incidental, practically a purely churchly matter. It would appear that the churches were struck dumb by the tremendous gravity of the national situation. The utter silence reminds one of the stillness which so often pervades Nature just before a terrible tempest is loosed and works havoc in the land. In view especially of the grimly threatening utterances of the Southland,⁵⁹ this silence could have been only the cautious accompaniment of profoundest searchings of heart and deepening determinations of will and purpose on the part of the steadily growing majority of northerners.

Controversy over the American Tract Society. The exception to this otherwise utter silence was in regard to the procedure of the American Tract Society of New York. This was an interdenominational Society established in May, 1825, for the distribution of Christian religious literature other than the Bible. As already noted, there had been a hesitancy on the part of some strongly anti-slavery supporters of the American Board to continue such support at a time when one or more of its missionaries in Africa had been discovered to be, or to have been, holders of slaves, and more recently because the Board continued sending missionaries to the Choctaws and Cherokees in the then Southwest, when some of these Indians held slaves. In the case of the Tract Society the anti-slavery men protested

⁵⁹ See, e.g., that of Mr. Rhett, a South Carolina statesman, of the school of Calhoun, in the *Mirror*, Nov. 25, 1856, p. 71.

the failure of the Society to issue literature which distinctly and positively condemned slavery. Of course, on the part of the Society itself there were those who defended its procedure on the ground that its charter directed that the tracts published were to be such as were "calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians," and the members of the southern churches who supported the Tract Society were "evangelical Christians."⁶⁰ The criticism of the Tract Society, as of the American Board, and of the American Home Missionary Society,⁶¹ out of which came the organization of the American Missionary Association in 1846, revealed the increasing intensity of conviction and feeling regarding slavery in all its connections on the part of thoughtful Christians at the North, and particularly in this last half of the sixth decade. Prior to the organization of the New York Tract Society there had been several local Tract Societies in existence, one of the earliest of which had been begun at Andover, Massachusetts; later had been transferred to Boston; and on the organization of the New York Society, though cooperating with the latter, nevertheless maintained its separate organization. To the Boston Society the Conferences were inclined to divert their support because its literature boldly condemned slavery while the New York Society was silent.

Though the matter was discussed first outside the State, within the State it is not a little remarkable that the first body to speak was the up-country Conference of Piscataquis. At its June meeting in 1856, discussing in general the matter of slavery, it passed a resolution "expressing a lively interest in regard to the publications and influence of the American Tract Society touching the subject of American Slavery, and the wish that

⁶⁰ See *C.M.*, Feb. 12, p. 108; Apr. 1, p. 135; May 13, p. 160, 1856; and an article, by a Congregational Director of the Society, first published in the *N. Y. Observer*, and reprinted in *C.M.*, Dec. 18, p. 77, and Dec. 25, p. 79, 1856.

⁶¹ The Home Missionary Society changed its policy under criticism, and withheld its aid from slaveholding churches, see *M.G.C.*, 1857, pp. 12, 13.

that subject might be treated by the Society as other subjects and sins are in its publications.”⁶² Following upon this and probably other similar expressions, a considerable publicity was given to the matter through the *Mirror*.⁶³ The most important of the communications in the paper was one from the Honorable Ether Shepley, one of the most prominent and influential Congregational laymen of the State who was a member of the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine from 1836 to 1855, from 1848 to 1855 being Chief Justice. As a jurist Judge Shepley laid a very natural stress on the constitutional aspects of the case of the Society, thus defending the Society against the attacks made upon it.⁶⁴ But even so prominent and influential a person as Judge Shepley could not stay the flow of criticism of the Society in the then state of public feeling over slavery whether inside or outside the churches. Piscataquis Conference, at its June meeting in 1858 passed a resolution protesting against a recent action of the New York Society reaffirming its previous stand. Waldo Conference at its June meeting in the same year passed a resolution condemning the action of the Society, and said, “We can conceive of no justifiable reason for their granting slavery an indulgence, and giving it aid by silence, while other sins of so much less enormity are condemned.” The same Conference a year later again expressed its disapproval of the course of the Society; as did Washington Conference in June, 1859. On the other hand, Union Conference in June, 1858, took positive action in a resolution of approval of the action of the Boston Society; as did York Conference at its meeting held in October, 1859.⁶⁵ So far as noted, no other Conferences took a stand in the controversy, it being probable that they continued to support the New York

⁶² *C.M.*, June 3, p. 172; July 8, p. 192, 1856. *M.G.C.*, 1856, 31.

⁶³ Cf. *C.M.*, Sept. 29, p. 34; Oct. 13, p. 41; Dec. 8, p. 73, 1857; Feb. 9, p. 109, 1858.

⁶⁴ *C.M.*, Dec. 8, 1857, p. 74.

⁶⁵ *C.M.*, June 29, 1858, p. 189; June 21, p. 186; June 28, p. 189, 1859; Oct. 19, 1859, p. 45; *M.G.C.*, 1858, pp. 44, 66; 1859, p. 47.

Society. As a matter of fact, all of the Conferences, and very properly, were primarily interested in the general revival which swept through Maine as well as other States in 1857, and the next year or two, but with rapidly declining power.

With the exception of the action of York Conference, that of all the others taking action anticipated any utterance on the part of the State Conference. This latter body, however, at its session with the State Street church in Portland, in late June, 1859, had the matter brought before them by Rev. Uriah Balkam, of Lewiston, who while at Wiscasset had led the Lincoln Conference at last to put itself on record respecting slavery.⁶⁶ Mr. Balkam introduced two resolutions, the first on Slavery and the Slave Trade, the second disapproving the course of the New York Society and approving that of the Boston Society. On motion of Rev. David Thurston, of Litchfield, seconded by Rev. William T. Dwight, of Portland, it was moved they be accepted. But Rev. John O. Fiske, of Bath, intervened with a motion that the resolutions be taken up and voted on separately. This raised a vigorous discussion, which led finally to the reference of both resolutions to a special committee, to report at a specified time. The committee appointed consisted of Rev. Messrs. Benjamin Tappan of Augusta, Wooster Parker of Belfast, John O. Fiske of Bath, Aaron C. Adams of Lewiston, and Elijah Jones of Minot. It was evident from the constituency of the committee, as also from the views of those who took part in the preceeding discussion, that there was little likelihood of unanimity of judgment on the part of the committee. So it proved. In introducing the report of the committee, the chairman, Dr. Tappan, of Augusta, said "that the meeting of the committee had been fraternal, but that they had not been able to come to unanimity. They were unanimous in a declaration of general principles; a majority had agreed to a resolution expressing confidence in the Boston Tract Society; but a majority could not be brought to condemn the New York Society, how-

⁶⁶ See *ante*, p. 168.

ever satisfied they might be that the Society had done wrong." The majority report was signed by Rev. Benjamin Tappan, Rev. John O. Fiske and Rev. Elijah Jones. It ran as follows:

"*Whereas*, We have witnessed, with deep regret, the steady aggressiveness of American slavery, recently culminating in the reopening of the slave trade with Africa, in flagrant violation of the laws of God, and of our own land;

"*And whereas*, To oppose the greatness of its influence is obviously an imperative duty of the Church, and also of all societies which by their organization and position represent the Church as teachers in morals and religion:—

"*Therefore, Resolved*, That neither the Church nor any such society can persistently refuse to extend the inculcations of Christianity to those overshadowing forms of sin, without pursuing a course hostile to the true welfare and glory of our beloved country, and being greatly unfaithful to the interests of humanity and to Christ.

"*Resolved*, That being deeply concerned to employ our whole influence in defense of the sacred rights of the oppressed, and to withstand that wicked commerce which is today threatening to establish itself in our land by law, we heartily approve of, and desire the publication by the Societies aforesaid, of all such books and tracts against slavery and the slave trade, as are adapted to save our country from these great evils and sins.

"*Resolved*, That believing that books and tracts of this description will be published by the American Tract Society in Boston, we give it our hearty approval and commend it to the patronage and active cooperation of the Churches."

The report of the minority was in substantial accord with the original resolutions introduced by Mr. Balkam; was signed by Rev. Wooster Parker and Rev. Aaron C. Adams, and read to the Conference by the first of these two signers. The resolutions were as follows:

"*Whereas*, We have witnessed with deep regret the steady aggressiveness of American Slavery recently culminating in the

reopening of the African Slave Trade in flagrant violation of the laws of God and our country ;

" And whereas, To oppose thereto the greatness of its influence is obviously the imperative duty of the Church and equally so of any Society which, from its organization and position represents the Church as a teacher in the broadest sense of Religion and Morals,

" Therefore, Resolved, That persistent refusal, whether by the Church or any such Society, to extend the inculcations of Christianity to a sin of such enormity, is, in our judgment, however designed by them, great unfaithfulness to Christ and the interests of humanity.

" And whereas, The American Tract Society from the very conception and profession of its plan, promises by the circulation of tracts — a mode of teaching singularly adapted to reach all forms of wickedness — to inculcate the great truths and duties of Morals and Religion ;

" And whereas, The American Tract Society of New York, having heretofore failed to make its influence felt in behalf of the oppressed of our land, now hesitates, as we understand its position and policy, to exert its influence against even that most wicked commerce, Slave Trade ;

" And whereas, Our American Christianity (already brought under suspicion throughout Christendom by the direct participation of many Churches and Ministers in the system of Slavery, by the failure of still others to bear explicit testimony against it) is yet farther involved by this action of a Society which in some sort represents it, therefore,

" Resolved, That we regard the recent course and present attitude of that Society, in this matter, with deep disapprobation and sorrow.

" Resolved, That the present position on this subject of the American Tract Society, Boston, commands our hearty approval, and that we bespeak for it an earnest cooperation."

Dr. William T. Dwight at once took the floor and moved the

acceptance and adoption of the minority report. It was voted that the questions be taken by yeas and nays, and separately. A vigorous discussion followed, in which not only some of the leading men from within the State, but also delegates from Massachusetts, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, from Canada, and from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, took part. Of the three men who signed the majority report, only Rev. Elijah Jones of Minot took part in the discussion. Dr. Tappan and Dr. John O. Fiske were silent. They would seem to have perceived how the current of feeling was running, and to have forecast defeat for their cause. Their forecast was correct. The first resolution and its preamble were adopted by a vote of 60 to 1; the second by a vote of 54 to 8; and the third by a vote of 59 to 3.⁶⁷ The times and circumstances had slowly changed and with them had changed the feelings and convictions of the great mass of the Congregational ministry and, we may assume, also of the Congregational laity, since the time when anti-slavery resolutions were parliamentarily side-tracked or incontinently suppressed in committee, in the State Conference and in some local Conferences. It, of course, may be urged that the question between support of one or another Tract Society was not worth all the discussion and division, but men were clearly discerning that mighty principles and as mighty a cause were at stake under a seemingly insignificant matter, and were girding themselves on the floor of debate for the field of battle. So far as the printed minutes of the meeting of the State Conference at Bangor, in 1860, reveal, not a direct word respecting slavery or slaves was uttered during the sessions of three days.⁶⁸ Men were holding their breath. When the Conference met in June, 1861, the North and the South were locked in the bloody struggle of civil conflict. Among the local Conferences in 1860, Kennebec alone passed resolutions on slavery, being thus the last before the war broke

⁶⁷ *M.G.C.*, 1859, especially pages 14 ff.; *C.M.*, June 28, 1859.

⁶⁸ Cf. *C.M.*, for July 3, 1860, p. 194.

out to speak, as it was the first to speak in 1834. Words were now futile; resolutions were vain; actions henceforth must speak. A great act, which also was a supreme word, the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln as a war measure in 1862, to take effect January 1, 1863, brought the long anti-slavery struggle to a triumphant close. True, the victory was a partial one. Personal freedom in large measure was won. Industrial freedom, still more social freedom, and most of all political freedom, were still to be won. When? No man can tell.

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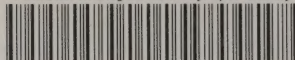
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